

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCSE Religious Studies 5RS09 01

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Introduction

This is the third successive year of the current Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies specification. The numbers of candidates being entered for this unit remains fairly consistent from summer 2011. A wide variety of centres enter candidates for this unit; entries included centres from both different Christian denominations and non- faith backgrounds. This also demonstrates that centres understand the benefit of candidates studying Christianity from a number of different Christian perspectives.

The unit requires candidates to study the nature of Christianity and its effect on the life of Christian believers in the UK. Candidates are required to explore a number of theological concepts and study different denominational beliefs and practices to some topics. Many candidates engage well with exploring the meaning, place and importance of Christian beliefs and practices as well as applying the key beliefs and teachings to life in the UK today.

The specification requires candidates to have knowledge and understanding of the four sections studied this is assessed through parts (a) and (c) of the questions on the paper. Also, they are required give evidenced based personal responses to different viewpoints in parts (b) and (d). Candidates who achieve the higher levels in these parts of the question make good use of their knowledge and understanding to evidence their point of view and why some people may disagree with them.

While this specification is comparable to the legacy specification there were some areas of the specification which were assessed for the first time in this specification. Some candidates performed less well on such questions, for example, question 7 (c) which assessed how and why some Christians show vocation by taking holy orders.

Though most candidates are well prepared for the style of questions on the paper there were a high number who did not correctly respond to part (c) questions with the command "explain how". These candidates responded to such questions instead following the command "explain why" and in turn did not gain all marks available for these part questions.

Question 1 (a)

Most candidates were aware of the definition for atonement and gained full marks on the question.

Write your answer here:

(a) Reconciliation between God and humanity.



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Examiner Comments

This is a fully correct answer as it refers to reconciliation and states who it is between: God and humanity. There were alternative ways to gain full marks e.g. reuniting God and humans.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates are not required to write in full sentences to gain full marks in response to an a question. This example was all that was required to gain the 2 marks.

Question 1 (b) (c) (d)

Candidates answered question 1 (b) well. Most candidates argued that the Holy Spirit is present in the world today through it being present through the sacraments. Those candidates arguing against performed less well; often not going beyond stating that if God does not exist, the Holy Spirit cannot exist.

Question 1(c) required candidates to explain why the teachings found in the Parable of the Good Samaritan are important for Christians. While there were some excellent answers a significant number of candidates either re-told the parable or confused it with the Parable of the Sheep and Goats. To gain the high marks on this question candidates needed to go beyond stating that the parable "teaches you to love your neighbour" and to make links with the parable. For example, the parable teaches that love is practical as the Good Samaritan paid for the man to be looked after.

It is important that candidates know the teachings given in the specification to help them respond to questions based on the bullet point: the meaning and importance of Christian teachings on the love of others. The teachings are Mark 12:29-31, Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 25:31-46.

For question 1(d) a number of candidates correctly interpreted "religious community" and were able to achieve high marks on this question.

(c) The ~~good samaritan~~ parable of the Good Samaritan reflects one of the Golden Rules as a christian: Love your neighbour as you love yourself. In the parable, none of the people who

walked past showed love to the ~~injured~~ injured man. If it was them lying on the floor they would want someone to help them. But finally the Samaritan walked past and helped him, despite the fact that ~~because~~ because of where they were from they were meant to hate each other. And the samaritan didn't just help him, he went beyond what he had to do and payed for him to have a bed and be looked after. This truly shows love for one's neighbour.

The parable also shows equality. It shows that no matter where you're from, what you look like or how rich you are, everyone is equal and should be treated respectfully. Another thing the parable shows is that you should help others and give towards charity. In the bible it says live as Jesus did. And also to show God's love. An important part of being a christian is to help people and show others that they are christians. So the parable shows people how they should live.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

It is clear that this candidate knows the parable and makes links with why the teachings found in the parable are important for Christians.

This response gained full marks as the candidate gave one fully developed reason and a brief reason. The fully developed reason was that the parable reflects the teaching of "love your neighbour", and was developed through examples linked to the parable. In addition, the candidate added a brief reason, stating that everyone should be treated equally.

Quality of written communication was good.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Use specific examples/evidence from the teachings given in the specification to help develop answers.

Question 2 (a)

Question 2 was the more popular question in section 1.

In part (a) many candidates gained full marks but some gave the definition for the trinity instead of unity.

Question 2 (b) (c) (d)

For question 2 (b) there were many good and well-thought responses. Candidates often developed their reason well through providing an example. Some candidates failed to address the part of the question about God and gave a response as to why humans should forgive sins.

In question 2(c) there were some excellent answers that reflected the fact candidates knew how a Christian church shows love of others in the local area. A significant number of candidates gave reasons why a Christian church should show love of others. However, even though they were valid reasons in themselves, these response did not directly answer the question. Also, quite a few focussed on the how a church as a worshipping community, but without linking this to the love of others, these candidates could not be credited.

Question 4(d) was well answered by many candidates; they fully engaged with the question. Most reasons for supporting the statement reflected the fact that scientific evidence has made people question the notion that God is the creator. The reasons not supporting made good use of the Design Argument, Christian views on the Bible and the nature of faith itself. There were many good examples were candidates used their knowledge and understanding of the whole specification to help them develop answers.

(b) I think that God should not forgive all sins because some sins cannot be forgiven. These people who have committed such sins should be punished ~~and~~ ~~not~~ forgiven deeply and not given a second chance, but I do believe that minor sins should be forgiven. Also, if someone is forgiven for sinning severely, it's like letting them get away with it and what's to stop them from doing it again?



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

On 2(b), this response gained 3 marks for two reasons one of which was developed. The first reason was stating that some sins cannot be forgiven. However, the response that follows this statement is not a development of this point.

The second reason states "like letting them get away with it". This is developed by use of the rhetorical question "what's to stop them doing it again?".

This candidate could have developed the first reason by either giving an example of a sin they thought cannot be forgiven, or by referring to a relevant teaching.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

To develop a reason, provide an example or refer to a teaching.

(d) (i) I agree with this statement because science has proved the theory of evolution which contradicts God as the creator and the Bible. Evolution shows that the world has evolved over millions of years - the Bible states God created the world in seven days. Also, if God created the world then he would have made it more perfect and there would not be any moral or natural evil. People would not have sin and there would not be problems such as global warming. Furthermore, most Christians do not take the Bible literally so they would think it was impossible. In recent times, the Bible and science have been able to coincide by looking at it symbolically so thinking that God is the reason for the world.

(ii) Fundamentalist or Literalist Christians may disagree with this as they take the Bible literally. In Genesis 1 it says "And first God created the ~~Earth~~^{heavens}..." this would mean that God was the creator. Also in

the Apostles Creed it says " We believe in God, the Father, Creator of heaven and Earth " therefore many Christians believe this. Furthermore, many would think that God created the world but have different opinions on how he done it so he could still be the 'creator'. People would also disagree ~~as~~ because of the design theory as he must have created the world as it is designed so perfectly for humans and nature, for example, exactly the right amount of oxygen in the air and the patterns on a leaf.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

On question 2(d), this candidate is an example of how they have used their knowledge and understanding to underpin their reasons.

The candidate is awarded 3 marks for both parts. Marks are credited on part (i) for providing one developed reason and one brief reason; for part (ii) marks are credited for three brief reasons. In both parts the candidate provides more valid reasons. however, as they have already gained full marks, they cannot receive any additional credit for these.

On part (i) the reason "evolution contradicts God as creator" is developed by the candidate providing evidence from evolution and the Bible. The second reason provided states "God would have made it perfect and it is not".

On part (d)(ii), the first reason stated is "some Christians believe in the literal truth of the Bible". The second reason states "Creed says God is creator". The third credited reason is reference to there being different views on how God is the creator but that He is still the Creator.



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Examiner Tip

Using words and phrases such as:

- also, if
- furthermore
- this would mean
- for example
- such as

as this can help to both structure and develop responses to evaluation style questions.

Question 3 (a)

In this section 2, question 3 was more popular than question 4.

Question 3(a) was generally well answered with many candidates providing the full definition for bishops. Some candidates instead described one of the roles of a bishop; in these cases only one mark could be credited.

The best examples of full answers referred to their leadership of a diocese or to their position as the successors to the apostles.

Write your answer here:

(a) Bishops are a little bit higher than priests also bishops confirm people.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a partially correct answer for the idea of a bishop being a "senior" priest.

If the candidate had stated that bishops confirm people (as this is a specific role of a bishop) they would have also only been credited 1 mark. However, they would not achieve full marks as this would not be a fully correct response.

Correct responses must indicate that bishops were in charge of a diocese as well.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Full marks can be obtained on the (a) questions by learning the definitions outlined in the specification.

Question 3 (b) (c) (d)

Overall, question 3(b) was answered well with many candidates demonstrating a good understanding of the different forms of worship in Christianity and the significance of prayer and the role of the Bible. Some candidates did not go beyond the reason that you can worship on your own and were not able to achieve full marks.

In response to question 3(c), some candidates struggled to be able to give valid reasons as to why the Bible was written by humans rather being the direct word of God. A number of candidates were unclear what the Bible comprises: some understood it only to be made up of the Gospels, and in turn were unable to fully respond to this question.

The specification requires candidates to know why some Christians believe the Bible is the direct word of God and why some Christians believe the Bible was written by humans about their experience of God. The best candidates made good use of the different approaches (the fundamentalist, conservative and liberal) to understanding the Bible.

In response to question 3(d), a significant number of candidates still relate questions about the Church with going to church and do not fully understand the requirements of the question. Some candidates described going to church in order to receive the sacraments; these responses received credit as this was considered a means to salvation. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the meaning of the term Church; these responses provided valid reasons both for and against the statement and made good use of their knowledge and understanding of different denominational views on this topic.

(c) People believe this because ~~John~~ Matthew, Luke, James and John all wrote different interpretations of the bible. However, only one of the 4 interpretations can be true. Also, christians may believe this because there is no evidence that God

exists. Another reason would be that God or Jesus never wrote about their stories or ~~miracles~~ miracles. Finally, my last reason is that who else would know that the virgin Mary gave birth to Gods son other than the people who experienced this event.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is an example on question 3(c) of how a candidate has struggled to explain why some Christians believe the Bible was written by humans about their experience of God. In this response, the candidate's understanding is that the Bible only comprises the Gospels. Some candidates have also made a common mistake of explaining beliefs of people in general, rather than address the views of Christians, as the question directs.

This answer gained level 1, 2 marks. The first few lines of the response are not clear; but it does give the idea that different interpretations mean that humans wrote the Bible.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates responding to a question about the Bible must be aware that it contains both the Old and New Testament. This will help candidates to fully understand the significance of the question. Both the Old Testament and New Testament are key words.

Question 4 (a)

Candidates who chose question 4 provided better responses than those who chose question 3.

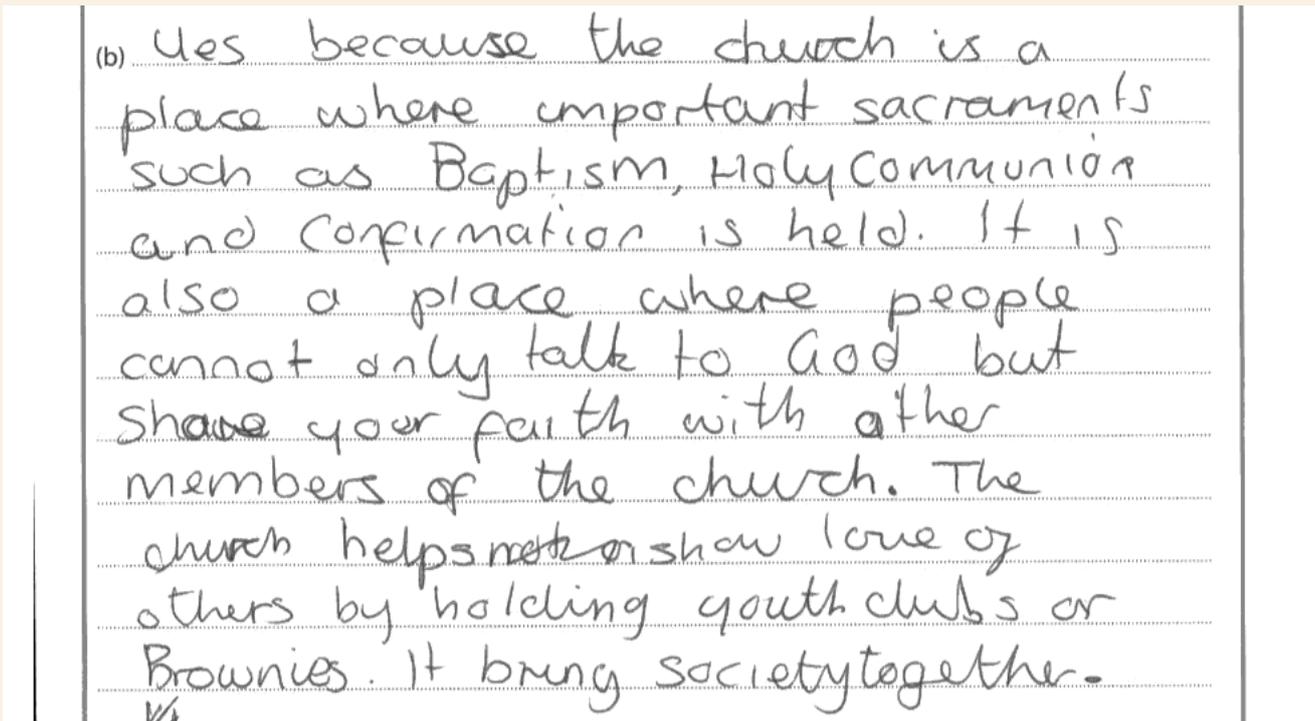
On question 4(a), many candidates provided fully correct answers, clearly showing that they knew these were churches linked to or in communion with the Church of England. Some were aware they were protestant churches but did not make the connection with the Church of England, so only received one mark.

Question 4 (b) (c) (d)

On question 4 (b), candidates performed well by providing at least two brief reasons. There were a wide variety of reasons given to this question varying from the social care it can offer to people, to the fact that some Christians who do not worship in a church. The reason was often developed giving relevant examples about different practices of worship within Christianity.

On question 4(c), it was clear that many candidates understood why the Apostolic Tradition is important for Roman Catholics. Candidates often gave developed reasons around the authority given to St Peter by stating that Jesus is alive in the Church today and that the message of Jesus is preserved through Apostolic Tradition.

On question 4(d), candidates provided better responses in support of the statement "all Christians should believe the Bible is the direct word of God" compared to responses to question 3(c) which asked for an explanation about why some Christians believe that the Bible was written by humans about their experience of God. On 4 (d), some candidates did not address the point that the question referred to the beliefs of Christians, but instead wrote that the statement cannot stand as God does not exist. This question asks candidates to explore the debate within Christianity about how the Bible came into existence and not whether it is reliable evidence for the existence of God.



(b) Yes because the church is a place where important sacraments such as Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation is held. It is also a place where people cannot only talk to God but share your faith with other members of the church. The church helps ~~not~~ show love of others by holding youth clubs or Brownies. It bring society together.

(c) The apostolic tradition is the holding down ^{the position} of the Pope. Jesus declared St. Peter the first Bishop of Rome known as the Pope.

The position has been handed down to specially and carefully chosen ~~pro~~ priests. It shows that the Pope today is a descendant of St. Peter. The Pope is the person who ensures that the Bible is not changed but is the one that interprets it. (Magisterium) He is ~~the~~ head of the church down on Earth in human form. It is important because the tradition has gone on for years and the Pope stands in the place of St. Peter and Jesus.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

On question 4(c), the candidate shows good knowledge and understanding of the importance of the Apostolic Tradition and focuses on the significance of the role of the Pope.

The candidate gives a fully developed reason about the office of the Pope being handed down from apostles by linking St Peter to being the first Bishop of Rome. The response is further developed by highlighting the significance of the role in the interpretation of the Bible for Christians today.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

For part (c) questions there are a variety of ways a candidate can gain full marks. These include:

- using four brief reasons
- or two developed reasons
- or two developed reason one which is fully developed
- or three reasons with one developed
- or providing a comprehensive explanation using one reason.

Question 5 (a)

write your answer here:

(a) ~~Charismatic~~ Charismatic worship is the use of speaking in tongues and healing.



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Examiner Comments

This is a partially correct response as only examples of charismatic worship are given (speaking in tongues and healing). The response gains 1 mark.

Question 5 (b) (c) (d)

In question 5(b), many candidates successfully used their knowledge and understanding of the importance of the Eucharist, in the different Christian Traditions, to justify their view on whether or not it should be received each week. Those in favour focused on it being an act of commemoration of the Last Supper or the belief in real presence and transubstantiation; so made good use of their understanding of the key words. Those against, equally had a good understanding of the different Christian traditions but tended to use the examples from the Christian denominations that do not practice sacramental worship such as the Quakers. Candidates who used reasons based on current practices rather than general reasons, such as "they are too busy working to receive" provided developed responses and in turn gained higher marks.

Question 5(c) was well-answered with many candidates gaining level 3 or 4. It was evident that candidates understood the significance of infant baptism. Some more able candidates included a greater level of description and more brief reasons than were required. Whilst they were not penalised for this in this question, the effect can be that they are unable to complete the full question paper or rush on one section due to timing issues.

There were some excellent response to question 5(d), demonstrating a strong grasp of the significance of the different festivals within Christianity. There were some candidates who incorrectly referred to Holy Week (and especially Good Friday) as being part of Easter. The specification clearly states that Holy Week and Easter are separate bullet points. Many candidates produced clear responses as to why Good Friday and the death of Jesus are important for Christians but could not receive any credit as the question was directly related to Easter and the resurrection of Jesus. The reasons given for not supporting Easter as the most important festival were well written. Most candidates cited Christmas as the most important festival as it made everything else possible. Many candidates provided good developed reasons by referring to the incarnation and how Christmas is a celebration of peace and joy.

(d) (i) 'Easter is the most important christian festival' I agree with this statement because if jesus hadn't have died on good Friday we wouldn't be free he died for us all to live, that's why its good Friday. I also feel that it is ~~good~~ the most important christian festival because it ~~taught~~^{teaches} us about how jesus died on the cross then rose again two days later and ascended into heaven.

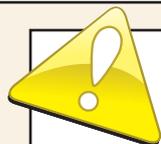
(ii) Some people may disagree with this statement because they feel that if we didn't have christmas we wouldn't have easter, some christians feel that if jesus ~~had~~^{was} never born then we wouldn't have ~~had~~ a free world because no one would have died for us all to live.



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Examiner Comments

This response to question 5(d) is an example of one where the candidate referred to Good Friday instead of Easter. For d(i) one simple reason is provided at the end of the response, mentioning the fact that Easter is when Jesus rose from the dead. In d(ii) the candidates gives one developed reason about Christmas. Overall the candidate gained 3 marks.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates must make it clear that it is their own view in d (i) and that of others in d(ii) . One way is by stating "I agree" and "some disagree".

Question 6 (a)

Generally this was a well answered question with many candidates gaining full marks. Most used the definition in the specification (when people confirm for themselves the promises made for them in infant baptism). A number gave definitions such as a ceremony admitting a person to full membership of the Church which was also credited.

Question 6 (b) (c) (d)

Most candidates who answered question 6(b) were able to give two reasons why Christians should or should not fast during Lent. Those who argued in favour generally made the point that it helps to remind Christians of the time Jesus spent in the desert and helps them to appreciate what it is like to go without. Those who argued against sometimes focused on the possible detrimental effects to one's health and found it harder to develop their responses and give a second valid reason.

Candidates were more successful if they stated that they should not fast by referring to other practices that were more important than fasting. For example, "spending time in prayer is more important" could be developed by stating that fasting may be distraction from prayer.

On question 6(c) it was clear that a large number of candidates both knew and understood the significance of Mass for Roman Catholics. The question was answered in a variety of ways. Some focused on the Eucharist, others on the different parts of the Mass and others on the place of the Mass in the life of Roman Catholics. All are valid approaches.

For question 6(d) there were many interesting varied responses to the question "Only Christians should celebrate Christmas." Candidates engaged well with both sides of the argument and used their knowledge and understanding of the significance of Christmas in answer to the question.

(b) I do think Christians should fast during Lent because they are following Jesus' example when he starved in the desert for 40 days and nights. Also, they are feeling the pain of hunger that the poor feel and have compassion. They will be motivated to go and help the poor.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response to question 6(b) provides two developed reasons. The first reason is that "they are following Jesus' example"; this is developed by the candidate providing the extra information that it lasted for 40 days and nights. The second developed reason is that Christians feel hunger when fasting so are motivated to help others.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates do not have to use all the space given for a question in the booklet to gain full marks on a question.

Question 7 (a)

Whilst many candidates gained full marks on question 7(d), there were a number who, instead of providing a full definition, gave partially correct responses such as examples of displaying religion. In the Sermon on the Mount displaying religion means the act of "showing off" or doing a religious act for public recognition rather than being sincere. This misunderstanding of the key word can lead candidates in answer to other questions to give invalid reasons for Christian action and worship.

Question 7 (b) (c) (d)

As with question 8, some more able candidates rushed or did not fully complete this question so obtained lower marks on this section in comparison to preceding ones.

On question 7(b), most candidates answered this question stating that Christians should work to relieve suffering and made the link with both Jesus' teachings and examples.

In question 7(c) a significant number of candidates interpreted holy orders as "divine commands" and could not be credited. Holy Orders are both a key word and a separate bullet point in the specification.

There were some very good responses answers that showed that candidates both understood what a vocation is and how this linked to a Christian deciding to take holy orders. However, some candidates confused this with people joining monastic orders and taking holy orders; other candidates were distracted by issues of celibacy of the clergy.

For question 7(d), it was clear most candidates knew the Ten Commandments. There were some who incorrectly associates "love your neighbour" as an example of the Ten Commandments. Some candidates made good use of their knowledge of the Commandments to illustrate why they are no longer needed or why they are still needed.

As with some other questions on this unit, some candidates did not address the fact that the question specifically referred to Christians. Some gave the reason that as people no longer believe in God, the Ten Commandments are not needed. This was not a valid response to the question.

A photograph of a student's handwritten answer on lined paper. The text is written in black ink and reads: "(c) Some christians choose to take holy orders because they believe that the bible is the direct word of God and because it says such things as". The handwriting is somewhat cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

(c) Some christians choose to take holy orders because they believe that the bible is the direct word of God and because it says such things as

help the needy, the Christians who follow holy orders would go out to help the needy and do anything that the bible or Jesus said.

An example of these types of Christians are Jehovah's witnesses, they believe that because Jesus said to spread his stories and the messages of the bible that they have to, they go to people's houses to inform them on Christianity and the teachings of God.



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Examiner Comments

It is clear from this candidate's response to question 7(c) that they did not understand what holy orders are. There is no rewardable material in this answer.



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Examiner Tip

For section 4 candidates must know what vocation is and the different reasons why people choose certain vocations.

(c) Some Christians choose to take holy orders and be ordained by the sacraments. They do this because they feel that it is their service to God to help others

worship him and achieve salvation from him. They believe that, that is their purpose in life. That God sent them to earth to continue the teachings of Jesus and fulfil his purpose. Bishops,



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Examiner Comments

This candidate clearly knows what holy orders and can give a valid reason as why some choose to take holy orders. In this part of the response a developed reason is given: "service to God" is followed by "it is their purpose in life to continue the teachings of Jesus".

Question 8 (a)

The most popular way of answering question 8(a) was to provide the three vows of: poverty, chastity and obedience.

Question 8 (b) (c) (d)

Overall, candidates responded well to question 8(b), making good references to Jesus' teachings about money. Some candidates did not develop their reasons, but could have given examples or provided teachings. For example, some candidates stated that Christians should show love of others by using the money to help other people. This could have developed by giving an example of a charity they could support, such as Christian Aid.

In question 8(c), some candidates still referred to "love your neighbour" as the Golden Rule. The candidates who performed well on this question opened their response with an explanation of the Golden Rule. This acted as a reminder about what it was helped structures their response appropriately.

On question 8(d), there were some very thoughtful answers for supporting the statement and candidates made good use of the knowledge and understanding of both vocation and the importance of raising a Christian family. When providing reasons for not supporting the statement, candidates focused on the other ways to showing vocation, particularly through actively helping others through one's job, missionary or charity work.

(d) (i) I agree with the statement, because raising a family shows that the Christian's only role-model is God, who is known as the Father of the Earth. Therefore they raise their own family!!

I also agree because being a parent involves showing care and love for those around you at all times. Therefore showing their vocation as a good parent at all times.

A final reason why I agree is because a Christian parent would help the children in life by teaching them the Christian faith through Bible teaching. Therefore, showing vocation as a good Christian.

(ii) Someone may disagree with me because they believe that in order to show vocation you have to give up luxuries (like Jesus did) and become a nun or a monk.

They may also disagree because they believe that in order to show vocation you have to get out there and preach to spread the Christian faith.

A final reason why someone may disagree with me is because they believe that in order to show vocation they must become a doctor or teacher - this would physically show that they care and want to help others around them. Therefore, believing that this is the best way.

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS



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Examiner Comments

In this response to 8d), the candidate started a new paragraph for each reason. All reasons are clearly linked to the question. In both parts d(i) and (ii) the candidates gained full marks for giving three simple reasons.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Candidates may find it helpful to ensure they fully answer the question by starting a new paragraph for each reason.

Paper Summary

Candidates should:

- Ensure they know and understand the meaning of the key words and make use of them in answer to all parts of the questions.
- Make sure they know and understand the importance of the key Christian teachings highlighted in the specification.
- In part questions (b) and (d), make sure they are responding to the statement given especially if it includes reference to Christians so they do not include invalid reasons.
- Do not confuse "a church" with "the Church" to be quite clear that the Church is the community of Christians. This is especially important when looking at the topics in section 2 of the specification.
- Be clear that a religious community is a religious order who live together as a group who can either lead an active or contemplative life.
- Know and understand what taking holy orders means for some Christians.
- To be clear why Holy Week (including Good Friday) and Easter are each important for Christians.
- In (b) questions to always develop reasons. This may be achieved by giving an example or referring to a teaching.
- Practice answering question in about 20 minutes to ensure that they do not have to rush and manage to complete the paper.
- Consider how to best structure their responses to ensure they fully answer the question set.

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