



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A
Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second
Religion
Option 2A – Catholic Christianity

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies A Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Religion Option 2A – Catholic Christianity

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award. The assessment consists of two questions and candidates must answer all two questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Catholic Christianity as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Beliefs and Teachings.
- Practices

Students will be expected to study Catholic Christianity within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian. Students should compare and contrast the areas of belief and practice within Catholic Christianity with wider Christian perspectives as outlined in the content below.

- Beliefs about the afterlife and their significance (1.8)*
- The practice and significance of worship (2.2)*

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1a

Candidates were assessed on Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.5: The Incarnation: Jesus as incarnate Son, the divine Word, both fully God and fully human; the scriptural origins of this belief, including John 1:1–18 and its importance for Catholics today

The question asked was: Outline **three** Catholic teachings about the Incarnation.

The majority of candidates were able to answer that the word became flesh or that God took human form in Jesus. Some candidates confused the incarnation with the resurrection.

Examiner tip: Candidates should write in three sentences to outline rather than list their answer.

Question 1b

Candidates were assessed on Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.2: Biblical understandings of God as a Trinity of Persons: the nature and significance of God as a Trinity of Persons, including reference to the baptism of Jesus

(Matthew 3:13–17); **the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity**, including reference to the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople.

The question asked was: Explain **two** ways the doctrine of the Trinity has developed throughout history.

Candidates on b questions should give two developed reasons. A significant number of candidates were able to explain the development using the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople. Candidates who did not do so well simply desalted what the Trinity was.

Question 1c

Candidates were assessed on Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.8: Catholic beliefs about eschatology: life after death; **the nature of resurrection**, judgement, heaven, hell and purgatory, including reference to John 11:17–27 and 2 Corinthians 5:1–10; divergent Christian beliefs about life after death with reference to purgatory and the nature of resurrection; why belief in life after death is important for Catholics today.

The question asked was: Explain **two** Catholic beliefs about resurrection. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates on c questions should give two developed reasons, and one reason should include a reference to a source of wisdom. Candidates had a mixed response to this question. Only a small percentage detailed developed beliefs about resurrection. The majority of candidates detailed beliefs about the resurrection of Jesus. Weaker candidates recalled events in the resurrection of Jesus.

Question 1d

Candidates were assessed on Section 1: Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.4 The significance of the Creation account in understanding the nature of humanity: the nature and significance of the nature of humanity being created in the image of God, including reference to Genesis 1–3 and divergent understandings of humanity's relationship with Creation (dominion and stewardship); the implications of these beliefs for Catholics today.

The question asked was: "Humans are the greatest part of God's creation."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

The majority of candidates were able to give two sides when answering this question, they were able to link to stewardship, free will and being made in the image of God. Candidates were able to compare to the fact that the world is being destroyed and the way humans have misused their free will as counter arguments to the statement.

A significant number of candidates did not address the 'greatest part' of the question.

In addition, some responses were given from other Christian perspectives and non-religious views. These are not required in the answer and therefore could not be awarded marks.

Question 2a

Candidates were assessed on Section 2: Practices

Bullet point 2.2: Liturgical worship within Catholic Christianity: **the nature and significance of the Mass for Catholics**, including its structure and the Eucharist as the 'source and summit of Christian life', with reference to Lumen Gentium paragraph 7; divergent Christian attitudes towards the practice and meaning of liturgical worship, including its significance for Catholics and the less-structured worship in evangelical Christian denominations.

The question asked was: Outline **three** things that happen during Mass.

Most candidates did well on answering this question and were able to outline at least two things. Most frequently used were transubstantiation, liturgy of the word, eucharist.

Some candidates incorrectly detailed that people receive bread and wine and symbolically act out the Last supper.

Question 2b

Candidates were assessed on Section 2: Practices

Bullet point 2.8: Catholic mission and evangelism: the history and significance of mission and evangelism for Catholics; divergent ways this is put into practice by the Church and individual Catholics locally, nationally and globally, and how this fulfils the commission of Jesus and teachings of the Church, including Evangelii Gaudium Chapter 5.

The question asked was: Explain **two** ways the Church evangelises locally.

Candidates on b questions should give two developed reasons. Most candidates seemed not to know the difference between locally and nationally. Many candidates gave generic answers

about helping the poor and CAFOD.

Those candidates who scored well were able to explain how offering the sacraments and Bible study helps locally. In addition, some used Catholic schools and the role of the laity in inviting others to share in faith.

Question 2c

Candidates were assessed on Section 2: Practices

Bullet point 2.7: Catholic Social Teaching: **how Catholic Social Teaching reflects the teaching to show love of neighbour**; Catholic teaching on justice, peace and

reconciliation Evangelii Gaudium paragraphs 182–237 – The inclusion of the poor in society; how these teachings might be reflected in the lives of individual Catholics, including reference to Matthew 25:31–46 (the Parable of the Sheep and Goats; the work of CAFOD, what it does and why.

The question asked was: Explain **two** reasons why Catholics show love of neighbour. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates on c questions should give two developed reasons, and one reason should include a reference to a source of wisdom. The majority of candidates answered this question well using the example of Jesus and the teaching of the sheep and the goats. Some candidates did not read the question and explained ways Catholics show love of neighbour not why.

Question 2d

Candidates were assessed on Section 2: Practices

Bullet point 2.6: Pilgrimage: the nature, history and purpose of Catholic pilgrimage; the significance of the places people go on pilgrimage; divergent Christian understandings about whether pilgrimage is important for Christians today, with specific reference to Jerusalem, Lourdes, Rome, Walsingham and the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2691–2696.

The question asked was: “All Christians should go on pilgrimage.”
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

The majority of students answered this question confidently, comparing the benefits of pilgrimage against other concerns such as cost, idolatry and commercialism of pilgrimage.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Answer a) items in outlines – this means they should write in full sentences.
- Provide 3 sentences for a) items, each should be on a separate line.
- b) items should have 2 developed reasons (not more than 2)
- Development may be 1) examples 2) quotes 3) extra relevant material.
- Development must link to the reason given and the question set.
- c) items are similar to b) items but use a source as a fifth element
- A source of wisdom may be a paraphrase but should be identifiable.
- The source of wisdom must be linked to the reason / way/ belief given.
- d) item responses must show AO2 skills to get high marks
- d) Level descriptors must be used to mark d item

