



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2023**

**GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 2A**

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## **Introduction**

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

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of two questions: candidates must answer both questions.

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

There are two sections:

### **Beliefs and Teachings**

### **Practices**

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.

Please note:

In some questions, marks are available for correct spelling, grammar and punctuation – SPaG

AO: Assessment Objective

## Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of three marks.

### **GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.**

An example:

Outline 3 characteristics of God:

**God is creator** (1 mark)

**God is creator** , judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)

**God is creator** , busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)

Busy, distant and **God is creator**, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)

Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)

Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)

Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Bullet point 1.6 The events in the Paschal Mystery: Catholic teachings about the life, death, resurrection and **ascension of Jesus**, including reference to Luke 24; the redemptive efficacy of these events and their significance for Catholics today (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: ' Outline **three** features of the ascension of Jesus.'

A significant number of candidates did not know what the Ascension was. Many confused it with the Resurrection. Some of those candidates who were aware of the Ascension wrote concerning the spiritual details eg rising to the heavens to be at the right hand of God, rather than outlining three features of the actual moment of the Ascension.

This is a good example of an answer to an (a) question.

Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of the ascension of Jesus.

(3)

One feature of the ascension of Jesus is that he is at the right side of God.

Another feature of the ascension of Jesus is that he was in a human bodily form when he ascended.

A Third feature of the ascension of Jesus is that he ~~came back~~ ascended after 40 days.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives three sentences, each of which contains one piece of correct information.

- ... right side of God (1)
- .. in bodily form (1)
- ... after 40 days (1)

Total: 3 marks



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Examiner Tip

Write three full sentences.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of the ascension of Jesus.

(3)

Three features of the ascension of Jesus is that God raised him alive and not dead. Another feature is that his ascension was on the day of ~~the~~ his last meeting with his disciples, ~~on the~~ after his last supper. & Lastly, another feature is that his ascension marked the end of his time as a messenger to people and his teachings.



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Examiner Comments

This response has three correct features:

- God raised him alive (1)
- on the day of his last meeting with disciples (1)
- marked the end of his time as messenger (1)

Total: 3 marks



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Examiner Tip

Always cover all parts of the bullet point of the specification.

## Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.7:

The significance of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus for Catholic beliefs about **salvation** and grace including John 3:10 – 21 and Acts 4:8 – 12; the implications and **significance of these events for Catholic practice today**. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: Explain **two** reasons why Catholics believe salvation is significant.

For this response candidates connected salvation to sin and also how salvation is seen as being won through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. Many candidates linked this incorrectly to redemption from original sin and the fall of mankind through the actions of Adam and Eve.

This is a good example of an answer to an (b) question.

If candidates separate their reasons like the example, it encourages them to give two reasons and search for development.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why Catholics believe salvation is significant.

(4)

Two reasons why Catholics believe  
Salvation is significant ~~is~~ firstly, Catholi-  
-cs believe that one can only receive ~~for~~  
it through God's grace and mercy meaning  
it is a sign of His love and care for a ~~person~~  
~~for~~ believer. Secondly, salvation is a  
way in which someone's faith ~~is~~ ~~strengthened~~  
~~is~~ and relationship ~~is~~ ~~strengthened~~ with  
God is strengthened and by receiving salvat-  
-ion you are forgiven for your ~~sin~~ sins  
and wrongdoings, therefore making a Catholic  
more pure and closer to ~~the~~ image of God.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate is awarded marks for two developed reasons:

- Reason 1:....through God's grace (1) sign of love and care (1)
- Reason 2: faith and relationship is strengthened (1) pure and closer to God (1)

Total: 4 marks



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Examiner Tip

Separate your reasons like the example.

## Question 1 (c)

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for the source.

### GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching'.
- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.1.

The Trinity: the nature and significance of the Trinity as expressed in the Nicene Creed; the nature and significance of the oneness of God; **the nature** and significance of each of the Persons individually: God as the Father, Son and **Holy Spirit**; how this is reflected in worship and belief in the life of a Catholic today. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: Explain **two** beliefs about the nature of the Holy Spirit.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Candidates were able to explain the nature of the Holy Spirit in connection to the sacraments and with the inspiration of Bible writers, as well as identifying the Holy Spirit with the third person of the Trinity and how it is present on earth.

Very few candidates were able successfully to use a source of wisdom to support the beliefs given.

This is an example of a good answer for Q01(c).

(c) Explain **two** beliefs about the nature of the Holy Spirit.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One belief about the nature of the Holy Spirit is that he ~~intercedes for Catholics in prayers.~~ inspires the truth in people. He inspired the bible writers, which shows to Catholics it is the truth. In a source of wisdom it says "The holy spirit dwells within us."

Secondly is he is the giver of life. Through him Mary was pregnant with Jesus.



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Examiner Comments

Marks are given for two developed beliefs and a source of wisdom:

Belief 1:

- inspires truth (1)
- inspires Bible writers (1)
- Holy Spirit is within us (1)

Belief 2

- is the giver of life (1)
- through him Mary was pregnant (1)

Total: 5 marks



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Examiner Tip

Link the Source of Wisdom to the belief/reason.

## Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion' – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers; giving reasons for and against but did not analyse or evaluate them.

Formulas and writing frames frequently restricted the flow of the arguments, limiting the candidates' progression to the higher levels. In many cases, the writing frames used encouraged appraisal but the candidates did not understand the demands of the skill. Some candidates wrote: 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or gave another point.

Candidates were assessed on Section One. Bullet point 1.3 Creation: the nature and significance of the biblical account of Creation including Genesis 1 – 3; **and how it may be understood in divergent ways in Christianity, including reference to literal and metaphorical interpretations**; the significance of the Creation account for Catholics in understanding the nature and characteristics of God, especially as Creator, benevolent, omnipotent and eternal. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: "The Creation account should not be understood literally."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

Many candidates showed much confusion here, with literalists and non-literalists, and who held which interpretation. Many candidates gave their own personal views (mostly metaphorical) but did not link it to different Christian teachings. Despite this, there was a clear sense in what most candidates wrote, that an understanding of biblical creation accounts was both valid and helpful in understanding the power of God and the creation of the world.

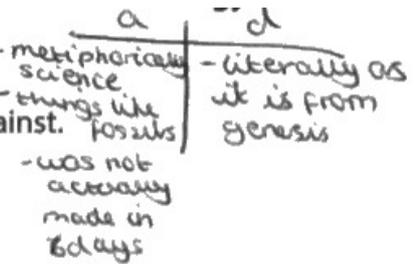
This is an example of a high Level 2 answer.

\* (d) "The Creation account should not be understood literally."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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



(15)

⑥ Catholics who view this statement as valid would argue that the creation account should not be understood literally because it is a metaphor to simplify to humans how the world was actually created. This can be seen as a strong argument as science has explained how the world was actually created giving Catholics a logical reasoning while also following the creation account.

Another reason that this can be seen as valid is that things like fossils have not been mentioned in the creation account. This can be seen as a strong argument because if the world was created as the Genesis claimed then we would not have ~~the~~ extra things such as fossils or plastic, moreover showing that it is a metaphorical description rather than a literal description.

However some may disagree with this statement as they believe it is a literal description of the world and the world has just developed from the time of when the account was written as humans have also evolved from then, and theref-

ore this is why not everything <sup>is in the</sup> ~~has been~~ creation account. However this can be seen as a weak argument as God would have known if the world was going to change during the time which is why he has only added vague description for instance 'Let there be light'.

Moreover some may disagree with this statement because Catholic Christians should believe whatever God has stated in the Genesis as it has some sort of authority over the scientific explanation. This can be seen as a weak argument because for the days that God created the world may have been metaphorical, for instance he created 'the world in 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>', the days the world was made is a different type of day to our days and ~~weeks~~ <sup>weeks,</sup> and God is omnipotent meaning he can create the world <sup>in</sup> ~~in~~ a second.

Personally, I agree with this statement because God is the all-powerful and could have created the world in a blink of the eye, the Genesis is just metaphorical and does not give full description or details of the rest of the earth. Therefore making this argument valid and more easy to understand.



- The candidate gives arguments for and against the statement
- Reasons are underpinned by a limited understanding of religion and belief
- The answer has connections, but they are lacking in depth and superficial
- There are judgements made but they are superficial
- The conclusion is not sufficiently justified

The candidate meets the criteria for SPaG 3 marks. The candidate spells and punctuates with consistent accuracy and uses rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall. The candidate uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.

Response: 6 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 9 marks

Level 2



Always read the bullet points under the question so you can answer all elements of the question.

## Question 2 (a)

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: 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** reasons why Mass is important to Catholics.

Candidates used many descriptions of what happens at Mass, with the less-able usually stating "it brings them together and strengthens their faith" which, although correct, lacked development. There was some rote-learning to secure easy marks, although there were some satisfying mentions of transubstantiation.

For 'outline' questions, three short sentences are all that is necessary.

2 (a) Outline **three** reasons why Mass is important to Catholics.

(3)

Catholics believe Jesus is present in Mass.  
Catholics believe Jesus commanded ~~to~~ it last.  
Catholics believe Mass is one of the seven sacraments.



There are three correct reasons in this response:

- Jesus is present (1)
- Jesus commanded it (1)
- One of the seven sacraments (1)

Total: 3 marks

## Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: 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. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: Explain **two** ways mission is put into practice by the Church.

Many candidates were able to link mission to showing love and charity, travelling abroad, or telling people about faith. The more able candidates were able to link to the setting up of prayer groups and Bible study groups, to encourage and support faith.

This is a good example of a fully correct answer.

(b) Explain **two** ways mission is put into practice by the Church.

(4)

One way mission is put into practice by the Church is through giving aid to poorer countries. They will send out aid and at the same time spread the good news to those suffering.

Secondly is they will ~~engage~~ evangelise in the public. This is so that those who are curious can ask about Christianity, and Catholics can preach to others.



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Examiner Comments

There are two developed ways in this response:

1st Way:

- ... aid to poor countries (1)
- at same time spread news to those suffering (1)

2nd Way:

- evangelise in public (1)
- people can ask questions (1)

Total: 4 marks

## Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.1.

The sacramental nature of reality: Catholic teachings about how the whole of creation manifests the presence of God; **the meaning and effects of each of the seven sacraments** including Catechism of the Catholic Church 1210 – 1211; the practice and symbolism of each sacrament; how sacraments communicate the grace of God; divergent Christian attitudes to sacraments, including reference to Orthodox and Protestant Christianity

The question asked was: Explain **two** reasons why the sacrament of the sick is important for Catholics.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

A significant number of candidates had very limited knowledge of the sacrament of the sick: some explained why Christians care for the sick. Those with some knowledge were able to give generic reason about how it brings a person close to God because it is an outward sign of an inward Grace – therefore also using a source.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the sacrament of the sick is important for Catholics.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason the sacrament of the sick is important is because it is a sacrament from Jesus. It is an outward rite which provides inward grace.

Another reason why this sacrament is important is because it prepares a sick person for death as, it is usually performed by a priest when somebody is extremely unwell. The priest absolves their sins which allows the person to be ready for their journey to the afterlife. If a person does get better it provides them with hope and comfort as they believe the priests have the ability to heal. This is because in a source of wisdom it states that the disciples would anoint those who were sick and heal them.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed reasons and makes reference to the disciples as a source of wisdom.

Total: 5 marks



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Examiner Tip

A source does not need to be an exact quote: a reference is sufficient.

## Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.3

The funeral rite as a liturgical celebration of the Church: practices associated with the funeral rite in the home, the church and the cemetery, including reference to 'Preparing my funeral' by Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster; **the aims of the funeral rite including communion with the deceased; the communion of the community and the proclamation of eternal life to the community and its significance for Catholics.**

The question asked was: "The funeral rite simply marks the end of a person's life on earth."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Many candidates were able to show a general understanding of the idea that the funeral rite does mark the end of a person's life on earth. They were also able to show that it marks the next stage and the transition to eternal life through the things said and done in the service.

Very few candidates referenced Christian faith. Many did not read the question and gave non-religious or different Christian viewpoints.

Candidates should consider the arguments they give. Many use 'This is a strong argument because' which, in many cases, did not add anything to the answer.

Often, it was clearly part of a writing frame and candidates used it without understanding what they were trying to achieve.

(d) "The funeral rite simply marks the end of a person's life on earth."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Some people may agree to this statement as it does mark the end of a person's life on ~~the~~ earth as they are no longer alive and no longer on this world. Also that prayers are read on them and the priest gives homily. This shows that they have left the world as the priest is praying and giving homily which is a sign of death and is a form of funeral rite. Also the ~~paschal~~ paschal candle is ~~light~~ lit. This is to remember Jesus before death and to ~~remember~~ remember that Jesus is the light as they were put on the earth to believe in ~~God~~ one God but in three forms (the father, the son and the holy spirit).

However some people may disagree to this statement as it doesn't mark the end of a person's life but actually the beginning. This is because they will be resurrected. I look forward to the resurrection of the dead. This is a strong argument as it is a source of wisdom, which shows that it is a new beginning as the next life after resurrection is eternal so the funeral rite doesn't mark the end of a person's life.

Also it says that the person will be raised in a bodily form like Jesus was raised in a bodily form. It doesn't mark the end of a person's life as they are still alive but in the next life.

In conclusion I disagree to this statement as they will be resurrected and will finally be reunited with God, and they will spend there life there as it is eternal. Catholics believe they will be resurrected.



- The candidate makes some superficial connections, but not all of the elements in the question are addressed.
- The answer is underpinned by a limited understanding of religion and belief.

The answer has some judgements but they are limited and appraisal is superficial, with a conclusion that is not fully justified.

Total: 6 marks

Level 2

## Paper Summary

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

- Do not attach extra sheets to your examination paper
- Write within the scannable pages, using the blank spaces
- When answering the (a) items use three full sentences
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) items must be relevant to the question and support the reason given
- The (d) items asks for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher grades are achieved if the evidence/reasons given is 'considered' or appraised for its value as an argument as part of deciding the evaluation. On (d) items the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, and answer the question asked, fully
- Candidates should attempt every question

## **Grade boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

