



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2023**

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

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# Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Religious Studies A – Faith and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second Religion

Option 2B – Christianity

This paper contributes to 25% of the overall award. The paper includes two questions, each covers a section of the specification, candidates are expected to answer both questions. There is no element of choice on the paper. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are expected to use the Edexcel specification rather than other published resources when planning and teaching the course content. The questions set to assess candidates are based on the specification only.

This paper allows an in-depth study of Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom, and its beliefs and teachings on. This unit engages the interest of young people, as it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

## Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings : Bullet point 1.5 The nature and significance of salvation and the role of Christ within salvation: law, sin, grace and Spirit, the role of Christ in salvation including John 3:10 – 21 and Acts 4:8 – 12; **the nature and significance of atonement within Christianity** and its link to salvation. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was 'Outline **three** beliefs about the nature of atonement.'

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)

Candidates who were familiar with the vocabulary of the specification did well on this question.

This candidate demonstrates how to answer the question in three clear sentences.

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about the nature of atonement.

(3)

- It is the reconciliation of the relationship between God and humanity
- Jesus' death is viewed to be what allowed atonement to happen
- atonement had to happen because the relationship between God and humanity was damaged after "Original Sin" of Adam and Eve



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate provides three outlines of belief about the nature of atonement.

Total: 3 marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Answer the question in three clear sentences.

The majority of candidates did well on this question.

1 (a) Outline **three** beliefs about the nature of atonement.

(3)

Christians believe that atonement can lead to salvation

Christians believe that Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent death was an act of atonement for all of humanity

Christians believe to atone is to allow God to forgive you for your sins through your actions



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate answers correctly, in three separate sentences.

Total: 3 marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Check the specification for specialist words.

## Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.3 – **The Incarnation: the nature and importance of the person of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God; the biblical basis of this teaching, including John 1:1 – 18 and 1 Timothy 3:16 and its significance for Christians today** (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: 'Explain two biblical teachings about the Incarnation of Jesus.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two points are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote, or examples. The development must be of the point given and to the question asked.

This question proved challenging for candidates who had not been taught the words from the specification, ie 'incarnation',

Many candidates confused 'incarnation' with 'resurrection'.

(b) Explain **two** biblical teachings about the Incarnation of Jesus.

(4)

One biblical teaching about the Incarnation of Jesus is that he was born to a human mother who is Mary and was ~~was~~ pregnant with the Spirit's baby. He therefore is wholly God and wholly human.

Another biblical teaching is that Jesus was incarnated to save humanity. This is because we need to act as a blood sacrifice in order to allow people to reconcile their relationship with God.



This candidate gains marks for two developed reasons.

Total: 4 marks



Separate the two reasons, as seen in this example.

## Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.4 – The last days of Jesus' life: the Last Supper, betrayal, arrest, trial, **crucifixion, resurrection** and ascension of Jesus; the accounts of these within the Bible, including Luke 22 – 24 **and the significance of these events** to understanding the person of Jesus Christ. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: 'Explain **two** things Jesus' death and resurrection teach about him.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons were required, and both needed to be developed for 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote, or examples. The development must relate to the reason given and to the question asked.

One of the reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must add to the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for being 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 teachers are unsure they will 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 candidates 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.

This question was approached well by candidates and many achieved the higher marks. The key to this question was being able to say what the death and resurrection taught about Jesus himself, not God, or the afterlife.

(c) Explain **two** things Jesus' death and resurrection teach about him.

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

(5)

One thing Jesus' death teaches us about him is his devotion and love for God. Before he died, he said the words, 'Father, into your hands I committ my spirit'. Despite the fact that Jesus is being killed for ~~his~~ his belief in God, that didn't stop him from loving god any less or cause him to hate god. This teaches us how devoted Jesus was, which encourages others to do the same.

<sup>One</sup> ~~Another~~ thing Jesus' resurrection taught us about him is that he cared and looked after his disciples. In the gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus ~~was~~ showed himself to his disciple in Galilee. After 40 days of continuously appearing, he instructed his disciples to go to Jerusalem, where a gift from the holy Spirit was making. This shows his selfless and thoughtful character.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate gains marks for two developed things and a source of wisdom.

Total: 5 marks

## 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, including their significance and influence.

AO2 constitutes 50% of the overall mark for the paper.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must some consideration of the validity of the arguments used/appraisal to gain the higher grades. Many candidates produced excellent answers giving reasons for and against but failed to evaluate the credibility of the argument. Evidence suggests the use of formulas and writing frames restrict the flow of the arguments and therefore the candidates' progression to the higher levels.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs and Teachings

Bullet point 1.7; **The problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God**: the problems it raises for Christians about the nature of God, including reference to omnipotence and benevolence including Psalm 103; how the problem may cause believers to question their faith or the existence of God; the nature and examples of natural suffering, moral suffering. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was "Suffering raises issues about the loving and righteous nature of God."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Appraisal of the evidence means considering the arguments given and their value in reference to the statement, in a way that leads to a justified conclusion.

\* (d) "Suffering raises issues about the loving and righteous nature of God."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

There are two types of suffering, natural suffering and moral suffering. Natural suffering is caused by nature which are disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis etc while moral sufferings are caused by humans such as murder and rape.

Some Christians may disagree with this statement as the 'story of Job' teaches Christians to always be patient and keep faith in God, during times of need as God will reward patience like he did to Job.

This is a strong argument as Job's dear possessions were taken away and yet he still kept his faith steady, as this is a biblical teaching Christians should try and implement this into their own lives. Moreover God rewarded Job by giving his possessions back and so much more illustrating God's nature as benevolent.

However some Christians may agree with this statement as they question if god is ~~the~~ omnipotent and benevolent why does he ~~allow~~ <sup>allow</sup> so much of pain and suffering in this world. If god loves his ~~the~~ creation so much why does he allow humans to hurt other humans.

This is a weak argument as it is not backed with evidence however this <sup>belief</sup> gives ~~the~~ Christians a reason not believing in gods omnipotence as if he was so powerful & benevolent god would surely prevent pain from entering the world.

Some Christians would disagree with this argument however & disagree with the statement, as if humans did not know sadness how would they be able to recognise happiness, if they did not know ~~the~~ evilness how would they recognise kindness. This is a strong argument as ~~the~~ god created suffering to allow humans to feel joy which therefore means he is benevolent ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~

In conclusion, the statement is incorrect as suffering allows Christians to prove their devotion to god even in times of sadness & despair.

(Total for Question 1 = 27 marks)



The candidate makes superficial connections between the elements of the question and demonstrates a limited understanding of religion and belief.

To gain Level 3 the candidate needs to consider the value of the arguments given and reach a fully justified conclusion.

SPaG was awarded 3 marks, in this example, because:

- The candidate spells and punctuates with consistent accuracy.
- The candidate 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

## Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices

Bullet point 2.7 – The role and importance of the local church in the local community: **how** and why **it helps the individual believer** and the local area; local parish activities including interpretations of 1 Peter 5:1 – 4, ecumenism, outreach work, the centre of Christian identity and worship through living practices. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was 'Outline three ways an individual believer is helped by the local church.'

(a) items are point marked – 'Outline' requires three outlined points.

Candidates are advised to write in three clear sentences so that there is no confusion about the outlines.

2 (a) Outline **three** ways an individual believer is helped by the local church.

(3)

- An individual may be helped through charity
- They may be helped through <sup>advice</sup> ~~advice~~ and support
- They may be helped through preaching to increase spiritual and religious knowledge.



The candidate gives three sentences.

They are more than just 'stated' or listed in the sentence.

This candidate receives full marks.

Total: 3 marks

## Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices

Bullet point 2.5 **Christian worship: liturgical** and non-liturgical forms of worship including activities which are informal and individual, including reference to the Book of Common Prayer; when each form might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes towards the practices, meaning and significance of liturgical and non-liturgical forms of worship in Christian life today, with reference to denominations which worship with less structure, such as some Pentecostal churches. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was 'Explain two activities that may take place during liturgical worship.'

Candidates responded well to this question. There was a good understanding of what liturgical worship is and the activities that take place within services of this nature.

(b) Explain **two** activities that may take place during liturgical worship.

(4)

One activity that takes place during liturgical worship is the Eucharist. This is where Christians take bread and wine at church. This is because it symbolises the body and blood of Jesus and is what he said to his disciples during the Last Supper.

Another activity is reading the Bible and the Nicene Creed. The Bible is the Holy Book for Christians and the Nicene Creed is their statement of belief. At church the priest may pray some of the Bible and teach the people how to implement it into their lives.



The candidate gains marks for two developed reasons.

Total: 4 marks

## Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices

Bullet point 2.6 – The future of the Christian Church: Church growth, **the history** and purpose **of missionary** and evangelical **work** including reference to Mark 16:9 – 20 and John 20: 21-22; divergent ways this is put into practice by the Church locally, nationally and globally; Christian attitudes to why evangelical work is important for the Church and for individual Christians. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was 'Explain **two** events in the history of missionary work.'

This question attracted a variety of answers from the Great Commission to Henry VIII.

Some candidates did not gain marks because they denied missionary work or gave examples of work done by missionary agencies, rather than answering the question.

Teachers are advised to study carefully the wording of the specification, to ensure that candidates are given the best opportunities in answering the questions. All questions originate from the specification.

(c) Explain two events in the history of missionary work.

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

(5)

Missionary work ~~was~~ is encouraged by Jesus as it is through evangelism by conveying the gospels ('good news') to all nations: ~~to all~~ "Go, then, to all peoples" and "to all nations" so that ~~the~~ people can ~~convert~~ convert to Christianity and attain salvation in order to go to heaven. Early Jesus ~~at~~ One of Jesus' disciples, Paul is famous as he preached to many nations, despite the oppression from others who were against Christianity.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate gains marks for two developed reasons and a reference to a source of wisdom.

Total: 5 marks

## Question 2 (d)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices

Bullet point 2.4 Pilgrimage: **The role of the sacraments in Christian life** and their practice in two denominations: the role of the sacraments/ordinance as a whole; the nature and importance of the meaning and celebration of baptism and the Eucharist in at least two denominations, including reference to the 39 Articles XXV – XXXVI; **divergent Christian attitudes towards the use and number of sacraments** in Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant traditions. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: "The most important events of a Christian's life are the sacraments."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

Candidates should ensure they take opportunities to assess and analyse the validity of the evidence supporting the statement.

(d) "The most important events of a Christian's life are the sacraments."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

(12)

Sacraments are the main fundamental practices  
of Christians should hold out, there are seven.

Some Christians may believe in this because each  
Sacrament represents ~~some~~ something important  
that happened in Jesus's life. For example, the  
Eucharist occurs ~~when~~ in Church because when  
Jesus was having his last supper with his disciples  
he said 'Bread' is his 'body' and the 'wine' is his  
'blood'. In the Church, ~~the~~ Christians have a  
piece of 'bread' to symbolise Jesus body and ~~to~~ <sup>they</sup>  
~~has~~ have a sip of 'wine' to symbolise ~~his~~ his  
blood.

This is a strong statement because sacraments  
represent something important from the life of  
Jesus.

like Catholics  
Furthermore, some Christians may disagree with this statement because the only important sacraments from the seven are Baptism as they are being free from sin and they have no sin - usually happens when a baby is born, and the second sacrament that is important is The Eucharist as it is the last time Jesus is with his disciples.

This is a weak point as there is no reference from the Bible, but also a strong point as it shows ~~how~~ to ~~test~~ Catholics the important part of Jesus's life is Baptism and The Last Supper.

In my opinion, I believe that all seven sacraments are important to a Christian's life because each sacraments symbolise different things. <sup>some may think that</sup> ~~Some~~ They ~~might~~ Reconciliation is more important than Baptism, as you are asking for forgiveness. However, I believe that they have been set in order of importance but people should treat them equally.



This response makes superficial arguments for and against the statement and demonstrates a limited understanding of religion and belief.

There are no significant attempts at appraisal of the arguments or judgments.

The candidate gives 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 ask 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

## **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>

