



Saint Benedict
Catholic Voluntary Academy

2026

**BE
PREPARED**

**Religious
Studies**



St Ralph
Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

A Level Religious Studies Be Prepared Booklet

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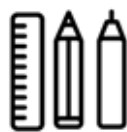
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Be Prepared – Equipment and Expectations

Equipment

Basic Stationery



Textbooks



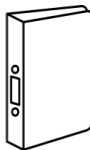
Exercise book



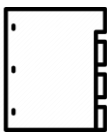
Homework



3 A4 Lever arch files



Folder dividers



Other equipment you may find useful

Flash cards



Highlighters



Sticky notes



At A Level in Religious Studies your teachers have the following expectations:

1. You will arrive to every lesson with all textbooks and this handbook, with pens and other note making equipment including lined paper.
2. All homework set is completed on time and with adequate levels of effort. If you are unable to meet a deadline you must contact the appropriate teacher at least 24 hours before the deadline by e-mail and request an extension. Any extension is at the total discretion of the teacher.
3. If you miss any lessons, for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to catch up by reading the textbook and getting copies of class-notes and hand-outs from classmates, before the next lesson.
4. You will keep marked work and make track of your progress neatly with the rest of your work.

Exam Board and Assessments

We study Eduqas A Level Religious Studies. See the Resources section to find the website.

The Eduqas A Level is comprised of three components, which are all examined separately. Each component is worth 33.3% of the overall qualification.

Component 1: Christianity

There will be four themes within each option: religious figures and sacred texts; religious concepts and religious life; significant social and historical developments in religious thought; religious practices and religious identity.

Christianity is taught by Miss Hill (ahill2@ben.srscmat.co.uk)

Component 2: Philosophy of Religion

There will be four themes within this component: arguments for the existence of God; challenges to religious belief; religious experience; religious language.

Philosophy is taught by Mrs Austin-Smith (vaustinsmith@ben.srscmat.co.uk)

Component 3: Religion and Ethics

There will be four themes within this component: ethical thought; deontological ethics; teleological ethics; determinism and free will.

Ethics is taught by Mrs Austin-Smith (vaustinsmith@ben.srscmat.co.uk)

You will be assessed on the following skills:

AO1 Knowledge and Understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:

- 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.

AO2 Analyse and Evaluate

Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

A Level Religious Studies Course Outline

Below is a general overview of the topics studied throughout the Eduqas A Level.

Christianity

Theme 1 – Religious figures and sacred texts	Theme 2 – Religious concepts and Religious life	Theme 3 – Social Developments in Religious Thought	Theme 4 – Religious practices that shape religious identity
Jesus’ birth	The Nature of God	Attitudes to wealth	Baptism
Jesus’ resurrection	The Trinity	Christianity in the UK	Eucharist
The Bible used in daily life	Atonement	Feminist Theology	Festivals
The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority	Faith and works	Challenges from secularisation	Unification
The Early Church	The community of believers	Challenges from science	Religious Experience
Two views of Jesus	Key moral principles	Pluralism and diversity	Liberation Theology

Philosophy

Theme 1 – Arguments for the existence of God	Theme 2 – Challenges to religious belief	Theme 3 – Religious Experience	Theme 4 – Religious Language
Cosmological argument	The problem of evil and suffering	Nature of religious experiences	Inherent problems of religious language
Teleological argument	Augustinian Theodicy	Mysticism – William James, Rudolf Otto	Logical Positivism
Challenges to inductive arguments	Irenaean Theodicy	Challenges to religious experiences	Religious language – Analogies
Ontological argument	Freud’s challenge of religion	Religious experience - practice and faith	Religious language – myths
Developments of the ontological argument	Jung’s challenge of religion	Miracle	Religious language – symbols
Challenges to deductive arguments	New Atheism’s challenge of religion		Language games

Ethics

Theme 1 – Ethical Thought	Theme 2 – Deontological Ethics	Theme 3 – Teleological Ethics	Theme 4 – Determinism and Free Will
Divine Command Theory	Aquinas’ Natural Law	Situation Ethics	Religious Predestination – Augustine and Calvin
Virtue Ethics	Abortion and voluntary Euthanasia	Homosexuality and polyamorous relationships	Hard Determinism
Ethical Egoism	John Finnis’ Natural Law	Bentham’s Act Utilitarianism	Soft Determinism
Meta Ethics – Naturalism	Bernard Hoose’s Proportionalism	Mill’s Rule Utilitarianism	Religious Freewill – Pelagius and Arminius
Meta Ethics – Intuitionism	Capital Punishment and Immigration	Animal experimentation	Libertarianism – Philosophical
Meta Ethics – Emotivism		Nuclear weapons as a deterrent	Libertarianism – Scientific (Biological and Psychological)

GCSE topics you need to know:

A level Religious Studies develops from the GCSE course. Below are topics covered in the A Level that are taught at GCSE. The **bold** text are topics that you will need to be confident with for the first term. There are basic summaries of these topics on the following pages.

Christianity

- The Trinity
- The Incarnation**
- Kenosis**
- The resurrected body**
- Baptism
- Original Sin
- Eucharist

Philosophy

- Big Bang Theory**
- Evolution**
- The problem of evil
- The Inconsistent Triad
- Original Sin
- Privation

Ethics

- The Ten Commandments**
- Abraham and Isaac**
- The Beatitudes**
- Virtues**
- Natural Law
- The Conscience
- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Original Sin

Christianity Prior Knowledge

Below is a summary of some of the key GCSE topics that you will need to read to refresh your knowledge before the first half term.

Incarnation

The doctrine of the incarnation expresses belief that Jesus Christ was God in human form. According to this belief, Jesus’ life on earth was only a short period in the story of one who had always been and always will be. His birth in Bethlehem was not the beginning of his story, nor was his death on the cross the end of his existence. While Jesus lived on earth, people found themselves in the presence of God in the flesh. As John’s Gospel says ‘the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as the only Son from the Father.’

The Council of Nicaea in 325 created a Creed (The Nicene Creed) which states that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human. Jesus was begotten from, but not created by the Father. Jesus is fully human because he is the human son from the Virgin Mary, his mother.

Jesus is fully God because he existed from the beginning with God, and was God. His fleeting appearance on earth as a human concluded after his ascension into heaven, forty days after his resurrection.

Jesus is fully human because he was born like any other human. He experienced suffering from birth through to his death, as all humans do.

Kenosis

The term kenosis comes from the Greek verb *‘kenóō’*, meaning ‘to make empty.’ The kenotic model seeks to explain an idea mentioned in Philippians 2, where Christ is seen as ‘emptying himself’ to ‘take the form of a servant’. Its main concern is to solve some of the difficulties arising from Jesus having both a divine nature and a human nature.

One understanding of the kenotic model of the incarnation holds the view that Jesus, the Son, deliberately gave up or set aside some of his divine attributes (especially omniscience or omnipotence) as a part of the incarnation. Some kenotic models focus on the setting aside of Christ’s own will so that he could fully show what it means to be wholly submitted to the Divine. The idea is also an indication of the importance of submission to God’s will, and an indication of Jesus’ ethic of sacrifice and servanthood.

Resurrected body

Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians that Jesus' resurrection is an undeniable, objective fact. He had a religious experience whereby he saw the risen Christ, which caused Paul to convert from Judaism to Christianity. He also records Jesus' appearance to over 500 people at once.

Paul believes that all Christian believers will also resurrect. Had Jesus not resurrected, there would be no Christian faith at all. If Christ did not resurrect, then Christianity is based on a lie. Jesus, therefore, must have been raised from the dead.

Paul discusses the nature of the body upon resurrection. On earth, we have a perishable, dishonourable and weak physical body. After resurrection, we will be given an imperishable, strong, glorious and spiritual body.

Original Sin

Original sin is the belief that all humans have inherited a sinful nature. Humans are born with the tendency to sin and therefore are separated from God. Adam and Eve committed the first sin, which caused the changing of human nature. Before the Fall, human will was aligned with reason. After the Fall, humans became corrupted by desire. As humans are descendants of Adam, human nature is ruined because of original sin. Humans are unable to control this tendency, so humans can never truly be good.

Philosophy Prior Knowledge

Below is a summary of some of the key GCSE topics that you will need to read to refresh your knowledge before the first half term.

Big Bang Theory

The Big Bang Theory is a description of how scientists believe the universe began. An observation that other galaxies are moving away from our galaxy and each other at great speed suggests that the universe is expanding. For something to be expanding, it can be deduced that, to reverse the process would suggest that there is a common starting place. A conclusion was drawn that suggests all matter was tightly packed into an unimaginably hot zone of infinite density, called a singularity. Using Einstein's theory of relativity, it seems that, approximately 14 billion years ago, there was a massive inflation of energy and heat, known today as the Big Bang. Before the Big Bang, there was nothing; no matter, time or space. There is strong empirical evidence for the Big Bang from astronomers and physicists. Even the Catholic Church accepts the Big Bang is a good explanation for the origins of the universe and is compatible with the Biblical accounts.

Evolution

Charles Darwin's theory of Evolution was outlined in *On the Origin of the Species*. During a five year expedition in South America, Darwin noticed several similarities and differences across species that lived in different environments. Collecting evidence, ranging from specimens, detailed drawings and fossils, Darwin presented his data. Natural selection is the process by which evolution takes place, through the survival of the fittest who pass on their genes to the next generation. Life began in a very simple form. Through reproduction, offspring produced slight variations to the parent. Those that developed features that were conducive to a long life had more opportunities to reproduce. Those with the weakest characteristics did not live long, did not reproduce as much and eventually died out. Throughout the generations, species developed with greater degrees of complexity. Geology and fossils helped to support the understanding of Darwin's theory and the theory is also accepted by the Catholic Church as a means of explaining how God created.

Ethics Prior Knowledge

Below is a summary of some of the key GCSE topics that you will need to read to refresh your knowledge before the first half term.

Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments, or the ‘Ten Sayings’ in the Hebrew translation, are ten verses that were revealed by God on Mount Siani. The Biblical narrative shows that Moses went to mount Siani and God spoke the words of the covenant, or the Ten Commandments. Moses received ‘two tablets of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the Lord spake’.

The Ten Commandments can be categorised into two themes: love of God and love of neighbour. They underpin all other commandments and are still reflected in societal laws today.

Abraham and Isaac

After waiting 25 years for his promised son, Abraham was told by God, to take his son and sacrifice him as an offering to God. Abraham obeyed and took Isaac, two servants, and a donkey and set off on the 50-mile journey. When they arrived at God's chosen location, Abraham ordered the servants to wait with the donkey. Isaac asked his father where the lamb was for the sacrifice, and Abraham answered that the Lord would provide the lamb. As Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, the angel of God called Abraham to stop. The angel said he knew that Abraham feared God because he had not withheld his only son.

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes were a series of blessings declared by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gives the encouraging promises of the Beatitudes, listing the values in life which will lead to salvation. The Beatitudes are a key component of Christian teachings, and they offer guidance on how to live a blessed life. The Beatitudes offer a roadmap on how to live a pleasing life to God. They encourage humility, compassion, and a strong desire for justice. By following these teachings, Christians can strive to live a life that is not only pleasing to God but also makes a positive impact on those around them.

Resources, textbooks, online learning platforms

Some Recommended Reading

Christianity:

McGrath, A. Christianity: An Introduction, Blackwell
Publishing Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Christianity, SCM Press

Philosophy:

Davies, B. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, OUP
Law, S. The Philosophy Files, Orion 2002; The Outer Limits,
Orion

The Philosophy Gym, Hodder Headline 2003

Warburton, N. Philosophy: The Basics (5th ed.), Routledge

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Evil, SCM Press

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of God, SCM Press

Ethics:

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Ethics, SCM Press

Norman, R. The Moral Philosophers, OUP

Specialised Journals

- Dialogue
- New Philosopher
- Philosophy Now
- RS review

Useful websites

<https://www.eduqas.co.uk/>

<http://philosophicalinvestigations.co.uk/>

<http://www.rsrevision.com/Alevel/>

<http://post16.reonline.org.uk/index.php>

<http://www.mel-thompson.co.uk/Ethics.htm>

<http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/>

<https://www.dialogue.org.uk/>

Recommended Films/ TV:

Sliding Doors (Film - Predestination)

The Good Place (Netflix - Ethics)

Louis Theroux documentaries (BBC - Westboro Baptist Church)

End Game (Netflix - Euthanasia)

Million Dollar Baby (Film - Euthanasia)

Life and Death Row (BBC – Capital Punishment)

Reversing Roe (Netflix – Abortion)

Oppenheimer (Film – Nuclear Weapons)

Podcasts

‘The Moral Maze’

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>

‘In Our Time’.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mwx64>

‘Thinking Allowed’.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b099ypqf>

‘Philosophy Now’.

<https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/>

Christianity Tasks

1. Annotate the highlighted sections of the Nicene Creed identifying the belief that is expressed by the Nicene Creed. Include information that tells us what and why these are beliefs of the Church.

Useful resources to help you

Breaking in the Habit – Nicene Creed explained <https://youtu.be/aBaiMWrX9v4>

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/the-how-and-why-of-the-nicene-creed>

I believe in one God, the Father **almighty**, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the **Only Begotten Son of God**, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, **begotten, not made**, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our **salvation** he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was **incarnate** of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, **he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the
third day** in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to **judge the living and the dead** and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who **proceeds from the Father and the Son**, who with the
Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in **one, holy, catholic and apostolic** Church.

I confess one **Baptism** for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the **resurrection of the dead**
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

2. Create a timeline of significant events in the New Testament of the Bible. Include events such as Jesus' birth and particularly the last week of his life. Include biblical references.

You could complete this either by hand or on a computer, but you must have a hard copy of this to go in your folder.

Websites for reference

<http://www.datesandevents.org/people-timelines/36-timeline-of-jesus.htm>

http://www.bible-history.com/Chart_Jesus_Chronology/

3. 'Is the Bible a reliable source of authority?'

Research the reasons why some Christians follow the Bible literally, some take meaningful truths from the Bible and other non-religious people claim that the Bible cannot be considered trustworthy. You should reach a justified conclusion. This should be written as a short, formal essay.

Websites for reference:

<http://request.org.uk/bible/questions-about-the-bible/is-the-bible-reliable/>

<https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-why-believe-bible>

Philosophy Tasks

1. Below are a series of short activities that help to understand different philosophical viewpoints. Answer them below.

a) Give 3 examples of **a priori knowledge**:

1.

2.

3.

b) Give 3 examples of **a posteriori knowledge**:

1.

2.

3.

c) Explain the **difference** between the two types of knowledge:

d) Give 2 examples of **analytic truths**:

1.

2.

e) Give 3 examples of **synthetic truths**:

1.

2.

f) Explain the **difference** between the two types of truth:

g) What **connections** can you make between each of these key terms? Consider which relate to **rationalism** and which relate to **empiricism**.

h) Give 2 examples of **rational** thinking:

1.

2.

i) Give 2 examples of **empirical** thinking:

1.

2.

j) Explain the **difference** between empirical and rational thinking:

k) Give 2 examples of **inductive** arguments:

1.

2.

l) Give 3 examples of **deductive** arguments:

1.

2.

m) Explain the **difference** between the two types of argument:

To help you with the above, use the following sources:

<https://philosophyalevel.com/glossary/>

https://youtu.be/_Xc8kzVcM3A

<https://philosophicalsociety.com/html/AGlossaryOfTerms.html>

Ethics Tasks

1. Below are a series of short activities that help to understand different attitudes towards ethics. Answer them below.

a) Explain what is meant by **deontological** ethical theories.

b) Explain what is meant by **teleological** ethical theories

c) Explain what is meant by **absolute** ethical theories

d) Explain what is meant by **relative** ethical theories

e) Explain what is meant by an **objective** ethical statement.

f) Explain what is meant by a **subjective** ethical statement.

2. Use all of the above key words to decide how a person making an ethical decision would respond to the following situation. Use your above work to help you.

a) Abortion

b) Euthanasia

c) Capital punishment

d) Humans' treatment of animals

For each, make sure that you include how each of the key words (deontological, teleological, absolute, relative, objective, subjective) would apply to the ethical dilemma. They only need to be short paragraphs.

e.g. 'A deontologist would approach abortion, by... [apply the definition of deontology to abortion] This means that a deontologist would... [apply to an example] Therefore, for deontologists, abortion is [their view]

Complete this activity on lined paper to keep in your folder.

Sample Paper



GCE A LEVEL

A120U30-1



TUESDAY, 21 JUNE 2022 – MORNING

RELIGIOUS STUDIES – A level component 3

Religion and Ethics

2 hours

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

A WJEC pink 16-page answer booklet.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Use black ink or black ball-point pen. Do not use gel pen or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

Write your answers in the separate answer booklet provided, following the instructions on the front of the answer booklet.

Write the number of each question you answer both alongside your answer and on the front cover of the answer booklet.

Write the question number in the two boxes in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer,

for example

0	1
---	---

.

Leave at least two line spaces between each answer.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Each question carries 50 marks.

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each part-question.

You are reminded of the need to:

- reflect on, select and apply specified knowledge.
- understand, interpret and critically evaluate religious concepts, texts and other sources.
- account for the influence of social, religious and historical factors on the developments in the study of religions and belief.
- identify, investigate and critically analyse questions, arguments, ideas and issues arising from within this component, including the views of scholars and academics.
- identify and analyse the nature of the connections between the components you have studied.
- construct well-informed and reasoned arguments substantiated by relevant evidence.
- present responses to questions which are clear and coherent.
- engage in debate in a way that recognises the right of others to hold a different view.
- use specialist language and terminology appropriately.
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar appropriately.

Component 3 – Religion and Ethics

Part **a)** of each question tests your knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.

Part **b)** of each question tests your skills of analysis and evaluation, with regards to aspects of and approaches to religion and belief.

Section A

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either,

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|------|
| 0 | 1 | a) Explain the theory of Emotivism. | [20] |
| | | b) 'Emotivism fails to encourage moral debate.'
Evaluate this view. | [30] |

Or,

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|------|
| 0 | 2 | a) Explain the theory of Intuitionism. | [20] |
| | | b) 'Intuitionism is the most convincing meta-ethical theory.'
Evaluate this view. | [30] |

Section B

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either,

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|------|
| 0 | 3 | a) Apply Aquinas' Natural Law to the issue of abortion. | [20] |
| | | b) 'Human law should always be based on Natural Law.'
Evaluate this view. | [30] |

Or,

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|
| 0 | 4 | a) Examine J.S. Mill's development of Utilitarianism with reference to:
(i) higher and lower pleasures
and
(ii) the Harm Principle. | [20] |
| | | b) 'Pleasure is the only intrinsic good.'
Evaluate this view. | [30] |

Or,

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|
| 0 | 5 | a) Explain soft determinism. | [20] |
| | | b) 'The strengths of soft determinism do not outweigh its weaknesses.'
Evaluate this view. | [30] |

Key vocabulary

There are many new words and phrases to get used to using and applying in the Religious Studies course.

Some of these words you will have already looked at during GCSE. These have been shaded in grey. Make sure that you are confident with these words for September.

Key vocabulary - Christianity

Atonement	An action or series of actions – usually a sacrifice- by which guilt is removed.
Baptism	The rite whereby a person is made a member of the church
Adult baptism	The voluntary baptism of adults who have declared faith in Jesus
Infant baptism	The baptism of babies, normally in the belief that the ritual will remove latent original sin
Birth narratives	Accounts in the gospels of Matthew and Luke of the conception and birth of Jesus of Nazareth
Christmas	The annual celebration of Jesus’ birth
Christus Victor	A view on atonement which states that Jesus’ death defeated the power of evil, which had dominated humankind.
Conscience	Moral sense of right and wrong; inner feeling as to goodness or otherwise
Consubstantiation	The doctrine (particularly in Lutheran belief) that the body and blood of Jesus Christ coexist with – but are not the same as – the bread and wine used in a celebration of the Eucharist
Council of Trent	Ecumenical Roman Catholic council held in northern Italy between 1545 and 1563 in response to the Protestant Reformation. Famously defined the relationship between faith and works in justification and had lasting impact on Roman Catholic liturgy and practice
Easter	The annual festival of Jesus’ death and especially resurrection. A Christian appropriation of the Jewish Passover: Christ’s death equated with the sacrifice of the Passover lamb.
Eucharist	One of the titles used to describe the rite of the Christian Church associated with the Last Supper that Jesus is said to have celebrated with his disciples, in which elements of bread and wine (usually) are shared among participants. From the Greek, eucharisiteo, to “give thanks”
Harmonisation	The attempt to reconcile two or more contradictory biblical accounts (or the editorial process within the biblical texts with the same goal)
Impassibility	The doctrine that God does not experience emotions based on, or caused by, the actions of others (e.g. pleasure, pain, passion).
Incarnation , doctrine of the	The belief within Christian theology that the second person of the Trinity – the eternal Son, became human in the man Jesus of Nazareth, through his being born of the Holy Spirit of the woman Mary
Justification - by faith alone - by works alone	Making people worthy before God. The idea that it is only belief in Jesus that makes people worthy before God. The idea that good acts make people worthy before God

Kerygma	The initial and essential proclamation of the gospel (and/or Christian) message.
Memorialism	The belief that the Eucharist is no more than an act in memory of Jesus.
Moral example theory	Also known as the moral influence theory. This theory of atonement suggests that Jesus' life and death primarily provide a moral example to humanity. They can inspire humankind to lift themselves out of sin and grow towards union with God. Christ did not die to satisfy any principle of divine justice. His death was designed to greatly impress humankind with a sense of God's love, hopefully resulting in a softening of their hearts and leading them to repentance. Thus, the Atonement is directed towards persuading humankind to right action
Redaction criticism	In New Testament studies, a method of critical biblical scholarship in which the authors and editors of texts are viewed as creative interpreters of their source material (and the examination of the effects this may have on the text and its message).
Resurrection	The means by which the dead return to life after death. Specifically, within Christianity, resurrection was believed to have been experienced by Jesus following his crucifixion. Understood by some Christians as the destiny for all or some human beings after death. The term can also be used in a more abstract sense to describe a mode of living experienced by Christians following conversion.
Sacrament(s)	Sacred ceremonies which are believed to be means by which grace is conveyed to believers. The classic definition is 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'. Nearly all churches (except Quakers and the Salvation Army) use the two 'dominical' sacraments – baptism and holy communion i.e. those explicitly commanded by Jesus, but with much difference of practice and interpretation. Catholics, Orthodox, and some Anglicans count confirmation, ordination, marriage, anointing and confession as lesser sacraments.
Substantial presence	The whole and entire presence of both the divine and human aspects of Jesus Christ.
Substitution theory	An umbrella term for beliefs that Jesus' death was as a substitute for others. Two common forms include the belief that Jesus died as a sacrifice on behalf of the people to free humanity, and the belief that, since the debt is owed to the divine (God) by the people (human), only Jesus (divine and human) could act as a sacrifice by God for the sake of humanity.
Transfinalization	The term used by the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (in place of transubstantiation) to describe his understanding of the Eucharist. The belief that the purpose of the bread and wine is altered by the words of consecration.
Transignification	The belief that, at the moment of consecration, the bread and wine of the Eucharist take on the real significance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ (but the body and blood are not physically present).

Key vocabulary - Philosophy

a posteriori	On the basis of experience; used of an argument, such as the cosmological argument, which is based on experience or empirical evidence.
Aesthetic	Relating to beauty
Anthropic argument	A teleological argument that claims that nature has been planned in advance for the needs of human beings.
Aquinas, Thomas St	St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) 13th Century Dominican priest, commonly regarded as the most influential philosopher and theologian of the Roman Catholic Church. The works for which he is best known are Summa Theologica, in which he summarized five arguments (The Five Ways) for the existence of God, and Summa Contra Gentiles.
Argument	A set of statements which is such that one of them (the conclusion) is supported or implied by the others (the premises)
Beings	Not just human beings but anything that has a property
Classical theism	The belief in a personal deity, creator of everything that exists, who is distinct from that creation and is sustainer and preserver of the universe
Contingent beings	Beings that depend upon something else for their existence. They have the property that they need not be, or could have been different.
Cosmological argument	Argument for the existence of God based on the existence of the universe; commonly associated with Aquinas' concepts of motion, causality and contingency.
Craig, William Lane	William Lane Craig (1949-), one of the proponents of the modern day Kalam aspect of the Cosmological Argument for the existence of God
Cumulative arguments	A collection of arguments which, when formed together, present a stronger case than when the arguments stand alone.
Efficient cause	That which causes change and motion to start and stop. In many cases, this is simply the thing that brings something about.
Empiricism	The view that the dominant foundation of knowledge is experience.
Ex nihilo	A Latin phrase meaning "out of nothing". Refers to the belief that God did not use any previously existing material when he created the world.
Immanent	Existing or remaining; in theology it refers to God's involvement in creation
Inductive argument	Argument constructed on possibly true premises reaching a logically possible and persuasive conclusion.
Infinite regression	A chain of causes or sequence of reasoning that can never come to an end.
Intelligent design	The view that an intelligent cause (which is not identified) accounts for certain features of the universe.
Kalam argument	A form of the cosmological argument that rests on the idea that the universe had a beginning in time
Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm	Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716, German philosopher and mathematician, whose principle of sufficient reason supports the cosmological arguments for the existence of God.

Motion	In Aquinas' First Way of the Cosmological argument, it refers to the process by which an object acquires a new form.
Natural selection	A key mechanism of evolution. It is the principle by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved and the trait passed on to the next generation.
Necessary beings	Beings which, if they exist, cannot not exist; beings which are not dependent on any other for their existence
Order and regularity	A key feature upon which the teleological argument for the existence of God rests – that both order and regularity are observable phenomena within the experiential universe, leading to inference that this is a deliberate feature of some intelligent being, responsible for the workings of the universe.
Paley, William	William Paley (1743-1805), 18th century, English clergyman (Archdeacon of Carlisle) and philosopher, famed for his Watchmaker analogy, which forms part of the teleological argument for the existence of God.
Principle of sufficient reason	There is some sort of explanation, known or unknown, for everything
Probability	The likelihood of something happening or being true.
Purpose	The reason why something is in existence or being done
Qua	A Latin word meaning 'according to' or 'relating to'
Teleological argument	Argument for the existence of God based on observation of design and purpose in the world.
Tennant, Fredrick, Robert	Fredrick Robert Tennant (1866-1957), English philosopher who developed forms of aesthetic arguments to infer the existence of an intelligent designer behind the Universe. Within Philosophical Theology, he also advocated a form of the anthropic principle to support his arguments for God's existence
Theistic	That which pertains to God
a priori	Without or prior to experience; used of an argument, such as the ontological argument, which is based on acquired knowledge independent of or prior to experience
Anselm, St	St Anselm of Canterbury (c.1033-1109), formulated the ontological argument which showed how the existence of God could be understood on the basis of reason alone
Deductive argument	An argument in which, if the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true.
Descartes, René	René Descartes (1596-1650); promoted reason as most reliable basis for knowledge and analysis and used the method of doubt as a means to arrive at metaphysical truth
Essence	The essential nature of something.
Existential	Relating to existence
Faith	A strong belief or trust in something of someone
Gaunilo	Contemporary to St Anselm, criticized the ontological argument by the counter argument of the 'most perfect island'
Kant, Immanuel	Immanuel Kant (1724-804); German philosopher and critic of the ontological argument who used the moral argument to contend for God's existence and life after death.
Malcolm, Norman	Norman Malcolm (1911-1990) argued for a form of the ontological argument based on defining God as an unlimited being and concluded that God exists necessarily.
Necessary beings	Beings which, if they exist, cannot not exist; beings which are not dependent on any other for their existence.
Omnipotence	The characteristic of being all-powerful. Some philosophers exclude the power to do the logically impossible.

Omniscience	The characteristic of being all-knowing of all things actual and possible.
Ontological argument	Argument for the existence of God based on the concept of the nature of being.
Predicate	Something that adds to our concept of the subject.
Proof	The evidence which supports the fact, idea or belief
Property	Nature or character
Supremely perfect being	This relates to Anselm's concept of the necessary existence of the most perfect conceivable being, i.e. God, in his ontological argument.
Augustine St	St. Augustine (c354-430) - Early Christian Bishop of Hippo (North Africa). Early Church Father, converted to Christianity relatively late on in his life. Great intellectual force responsible for the formalisation of what is now accepted as Christian orthodoxy in terms of belief and ethics. Famous works include his Confessions and The City of God.
Augustinian-type theodicy	Argument based on genesis and the Fall. Evil is caused by created beings, not God. People's response to evil and God's rescue plan decides their destiny. Often referred to as soul-deciding.
Classical theism	Belief in a personal deity, creator of everything, who is distinct from that creation and is sustainer and preserver of the universe.
Epistemic distance	A distance of knowledge. A phrase used by John Hick in his development of Irenaeus's theodicy to refer to the distance of knowledge between God and humankind, so allows human beings to choose freely
Eschatological justification	Meaning that all things will be made clear or 'justified' in the end times or 'eschaton'
Evil	That which produces suffering; the moral opposite of good.
Freewill	The ability to make choices that are not determined by prior causes or by divine intervention.
Irenaeus-type theodicy	The presence of evil is deliberate and helps people to grow and develop. Often referred to as soul-making.
Mackie, J. L.	J. L. Mackie (1917-1981), 20th Century Australian philosopher who famously formulated the inconsistent triad as an expression for the classical problem of evil.
Moral evil	Events in which responsible actions by human beings cause suffering or harm e.g. war
Natural evil	Events caused by nature that cause suffering but over which human beings have little or no control e.g. earthquakes
Paul, Gregory S.	Gregory S. Paul (1954-), 21st century paleontologist and theological observer, who stated that the statistical weight of the amount of suffering experienced by children challenges the Christian understanding of a benevolent creator God.
Privation	Deprivation or absence of something that ought to be there; term used in Augustinian theodicy – evil is seen as an absence of good
Rowe, William	William Rowe (1931-2015), 20th/21st Century American philosopher who stated that the weight of evidence of suffering in the world proved that God could not exist.
Second-order goods	Moral goods that result from a response to evil e.g. compassion
Soul-deciding	A concept that describes how suffering helps humans to choose whether to do good (and choose the path God intended) or to do evil (and to reject the plan God had for humanity).

Soul-making	A concept within the traditions of the Irenaean theodicy that describes how suffering helps humans develop morally (from God's 'image' into his 'likeness' – c.f. Genesis 1:26)
Theodicy	A justification of the righteousness of God, given the existence of evil.
Asceticism	Deliberate self-denial of bodily pleasures for the attainment of spiritual fulfilment.
Charismatic	Christians of various groups who seek an ecstatic religious experience, often including speaking in tongues.
Conversion	To change direction or to turn around.
Description-related	Relating to descriptions of mystical experiences as a basis for challenging their authenticity
Foundational belief	A belief that needs no further proof to support it.
Franks Davis, Caroline	Caroline Franks Davis - scholar who demonstrated how the authenticity of religious experiences could be challenged
Immanent	Existing or remaining; in theology it refers to God's involvement in creation
Ineffable	Defies expression, unutterable, indescribable, indefinable
James, William	William James (1842-1910) 19th/20th Century American psychologist renowned for investigations into religious experience and mysticism.
Monism	The view that there is only one basic and fundamental reality
Mystical	Experiences or systematic meditation, which cause a heightened awareness of the divine or an ultimate reality
Noetic	Gaining special knowledge or insights that are unobtainable by the intellect alone; usually as a result of a mystical experience.
Numinous	An experience of the holy; something wholly other than the natural world and beyond comprehension.
Object-related	Relating to the object (that that was experienced) of mystical experiences as a basis for challenging their authenticity
Otto, Rudolf	Rudolf Otto (1869-1937) in his book The Idea of the Holy, defined the concept of the holy as that which is numinous
Passive	Where the recipient(s) of the mystical experience do not bring it about themselves – the actual moment is governed by a being or force external to the will of the recipient
Subject-related	Relating to the subject (recipient) of mystical experiences as a basis for challenging their authenticity.
Subjective	Having its source within the mind
Sufism	The mystical tradition within Islam.
Transcendent	Having existence outside the material universe.
Transient	The experience may be short-lived, but the effects tend to last much longer than the experience itself.
Veridical	When the object of the experience actually exists as a reality and not just in the imagination.
Vision	Something seen other than by ordinary sight.

Key vocabulary - Ethics

Ethics	This term comes from the Greek word ethikos, which in its root form (ethos) means custom or habit. For the Greeks it referred to the appropriate or customary way to behave in society. In modern times it refers to a branch of moral philosophy that aims to determine the meaning of right and wrong
Ethical	Conforming to the accepted standards of social or professional behaviour.
Adams, Robert	American philosopher born in 1937, he created a modified version of the ‘Divine Command Theory’.
Arbitrariness problem	Criticism of the Divine Command Theory that basically states that if God commands morality then morality becomes purely arbitrary.
Aristotle	Ancient Greek Philosopher (384 BC – 322 BC), who was taught by Plato at the Academy. Eventually split from the philosophy of Plato and created his own philosophical ideas that have heavily influenced western philosophy
Beatitudes	Jesus gave humanity the eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.
Divine Command Theory	Meta-ethical theory that believes that morality is dependent upon God. Moral goodness occurs when moral agents are obedient to God’s commands.
Ethical Egoism	Normative ethic that claims moral agents should do what is in their own self-interest. Therefore, an action is morally right if it maximises one’s self-interest.
Euthyphro dilemma	Dilemma originally found in Plato’s dialogue Euthyphro. Basically the dilemma asks is something good only because God commands it or because it is good in itself and God just enforces it.
Moral virtues	A type of virtue distinguished by Aristotle. According to Aristotle moral virtues are personal characteristics that need to be practised and can be achieved by following the ‘mean’.
Pluralism objection	Basically states that the Divine Command Theory is unrealistic given the contradictory nature of God’s commands as claimed by different religions.
Psychological Egoism	Psychological school of thought that believes people can only act in their own self-interest.
Stirner, Max	Max Stirner (born Johann Schmidt in 1806) was a German philosopher. He was one of the forerunners of egoism, nihilism and anarchism. Stirner’s main work is ‘The Ego and Its Own’.
Virtue	A type of ethical theory which seeks to define what kind of behaviour leads to the development of personal or communal qualities of goodness or excellence, rather than whether an act is good or bad in itself.
Abortion	A medical procedure to terminate a pregnancy, normally before the foetus can survive independently.
Applied ethics	The application of ethical theories to practical situations and moral dilemmas.
Aquinas	Thomas Aquinas, 13th century Dominican priest (1224-1274), commonly regarded as the most influential philosopher and theologian of the Roman Catholic Church. Famous works include Summa Theologica and Summa Contra Gentiles. Developed the ethical theory known as Natural Law or Natural Moral Law.

Cardinal virtues	There are four cardinal virtues identified by reason: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude. Known as ‘cardinal’ virtues because the Latin term ‘cardo’ means ‘hinge’. They are believed to form the fundamental basis of a moral life and were terms used both by Aristotle and Aquinas.
Charity	Selfless, unconditional, and voluntary loving-kindness for others in response to God’s love. One of the three theological virtues outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 by St Paul along with faith and hope. Charity is a virtue included by Aquinas as part of his Natural Law theory. He believed that developing such virtues brought people closer to God’s ideal of human nature.
Euthanasia	Literally ‘a good death’. It describes a medical procedure by which either a person terminates his or her own life because of extreme pain or suffering, or the life of another person is either allowed to come to an end or is brought to an end with the assistance of others, because of a critical medical condition.
Faith	Steadfastness in belief in God; one of the three theological virtues outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 by St Paul along with hope and charity; included by Aquinas as part of his Natural Law theory
Fortitude	Sometimes referred to as courage; to show endurance, and to possess the ability to confront fear and uncertainty or intimidation in order to achieve one’s goal; one of the four cardinal virtues (see above)
Four levels of law	Aquinas believed that there are four types of related law. These are: eternal law - God creates all that exists with a purpose and everything acts according to God’s plan; divine law - divine law is God’s eternal law given through scripture; natural law - some aspects of God’s eternal law are also accessible via natural law which we can discover through our ability to reason, enabling us to distinguish between right and wrong. Aquinas believed that we cannot grasp all the details of eternal law until God reveals them to us upon our death; human law - society’s legal systems that should be derived from natural and divine law.
Interior/ exterior acts	Terms used by Aquinas as part of his Natural Law theory to distinguish between the motive for an act and the act itself. The interior act is the motive/intention for performing an act. The exterior act is the actual act itself. In order for an act to be truly good, both the interior and exterior acts must be good.
Justice	The treatment of people with equality and fairness, both generally and before the law
Hope	An expectation of and desire of receiving; refraining from despair; believing in the possibility of eternal life in heaven with God. One of the three theological virtues outlined in 1 Corinthians 13 by St Paul along with faith and charity
Natural Law	Ethical theory based on the concept of a final cause or purpose, which determines everything’s natural use or goal; a body of universal moral truths deduced from reason and experience; a view associated with Aristotle and developed by Aquinas.
Primary precepts	The five main purposes of humankind’s existence (given by God) according to Aquinas’ Natural Law theory: to worship God, to live in an ordered society, to reproduce, to learn and to defend the innocent. These are the absolute and deontological principles found within Aquinas’ Natural Law theory. These principles should not be broken.
Prudence	The ability to judge rationally between actions and to recognise the most appropriate actions at a given time. One of the four cardinal virtues.
Real/apparent goods	Aquinas believed that we should use our ability to reason to distinguish between what he called real and apparent goods. A real good is a something that helps us to become nearer to the ideal human nature that God had planned for us e.g. been a sociable person. An apparent good is a vice that takes us further away from the ideal human nature that God had planned e.g. taking drugs or alcohol in an attempt to become more sociable. Aquinas believed that no one knowingly pursues evil by choosing an apparent good, but sometimes we don’t use our ability to reason properly and this error occurs.
Revealed virtues	The three virtues of faith, hope and charity revealed or disclosed through Scripture (St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13). Christian theology teaches that these virtues differ from the cardinal virtues in that they cannot be obtained by human effort. A person can only receive them by being infused through divine grace into the person. Also often called theological virtues because they are directed by God.

Secondary precepts	These are derived from the primary precepts. For example, the principle ‘to live in an ordered society’ leads to rules such as ‘return property to those from whom it was stolen.’ However, the secondary precepts have to be interpreted in the context of the situation and there is some flexibility in extreme cases. For example, if someone owned a gun that had been stolen from them, but intends to kill others with it upon its return then you would not return it as this is the rational thing to do.
Temperance	Self-control or restraint, abstention, and moderation. The ability to control instincts and desires in order to be considered honourable. One of the four cardinal virtues.
Agape	The ‘selfless love’ principle which is the foundation of Situation Ethics developed by Joseph Fletcher.
Antinomianism	The idea that people are under no obligation to obey the laws of ethics or morality as presented by religious authorities. This approach is completely situationist. There are no rules, laws or principles which must be followed: the situation itself will provide the solution, which can be found through intuition.
Conscience	A person’s moral sense of right and wrong; the part of a person that judges the morality of one's own actions.
Four Working Principles	One of the two sets of guiding principles of Situation Ethics (the other being the six fundamental principles) devised by Fletcher in order to help decide what the most loving action in any given situation would be. They are personalism, positivism, pragmatism and relativism.
Fletcher, Joseph	Joseph Fletcher, American professor (1905-1991) who formalised the theory known as Situation Ethics in his book Situation Ethics: The New Morality (1966). Fletcher was a leading academic involved in topics ranging from abortion to cloning. He was ordained as an Episcopalian priest, but later identified himself as an atheist. Fletcher said that we should always use the principle of agape (selfless love) and apply it to the situation we are dealing with. He said we should always act lovingly and that no two situations are identical. His theory was both relativistic and consequentialist
Homosexual relationship	A person being in a romantic and intimate (sometimes sexual) relationship with someone of the same sex.
Legalism	An ethical approach based on prescribed rules by which people can make every moral decision. Legalism is often linked to the idea that obedience to a code of religious law is necessary in order for a person to gain eternal life.
Nuclear deterrence	The belief that the possession of an arsenal of nuclear weapons defends a state from attack by another state, merely on the basis of a threat to deploy such weapons.
Personalism	One of Fletcher’s four working principles: people, not laws, must be put first in any given situation, and one must aim to achieve the most loving outcome. For example, a woman stealing food to feed her starving children would be acceptable according to this principle
Polyamorous relationship	This is the practice and acceptance of intimate relationships that are not exclusive with respect to other sexual relationships, with knowledge and consent of everyone involved.
Positivism	One of Fletcher’s four working principles: it means that one must accept that acting in the most loving way is the right thing to do without any rational proof that it is. Love provides justification, not proof, for an ethical decision. Agape is morally right without question.
Pragmatism	One of Fletcher’s four working principles, it means one must evaluate the situation and perform whatever action is practical/workable, motivated by love
Relativism	The view that there are no universal moral norms, but that an action should be judged right or wrong depending on the social, cultural and individual circumstances in each situation; one of Fletcher’s four working principles.

Six Fundamental Principles	One of the two sets of guiding principles of Situation Ethics (the other being the four working principles) devised by Fletcher in order to help decide what the most loving action in any given situation would be. These six fundamental principles are: only one thing is intrinsically good, namely love, nothing else at all; only the principle of love provides a reasonable base by which to make judgements of right and wrong; love and justice are the same, for justice is love distributed, nothing else; love wills the good of others, regardless of feelings; a loving end justifies the means; love's decisions are made situationally, not prescriptively.
Act Utilitarianism	A form of Utilitarianism associated with Bentham that treats each moral situation as unique and each 'act' is deemed to be right or wrong based on the consequences it produces. Bentham presumed that pleasure should be sought and pain avoided.
Animal experimentation	Animal research is the use of non-human animals in experiments that seek to control the variables that affect the biological system under study.
Bentham, Jeremy	Jeremy Bentham, philosopher, economist and social reformer (1748-1832), developed the theory known as Act Utilitarianism. He developed the principle of utility or the greatest happiness principle to help people achieve happiness. It states that an action is right if it produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number. He also devised the hedonic calculus as a means of measuring pleasure.
Happiness	The term used by Utilitarians to describe pleasure which is 'good'
Harm principle	Principle created by John Stuart Mill. He argued that the only reason power can be rightfully exercised over a member of a civilised community, against their will, is to prevent harm to others.
Hedonic calculus	The criteria by which an Act Utilitarian attempts to measure pleasure and determine whether or not an action is right. Bentham's seven criteria are: certainty - how sure are you that the happiness will happen? duration - how long does the happiness last? extent - how many people does the happiness affect? intensity - how strong is the happiness? Purity – how free from pain is it? Remoteness - how close in time is the pleasure for those involved? Richness - how much more pleasure will this lead to?
Higher pleasures	Term used by J.S. Mill to distinguish between different forms of happiness. Higher pleasures are superior pleasures and are pleasures of the mind: intellectual pursuits, spiritual reflection etc. They are superior to lower pleasures. He believed that the quality of happiness produced by an act was more important than the quantity
Lower pleasures	Term used by J.S. Mill to distinguish between different forms of happiness. Lower pleasures are inferior pleasures and are pleasures of the body, satisfying the bodily need for food, water, sleep, etc. He believed that the quality of happiness an act produced was more important than the quantity
Mill, J.S.	John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was a Utilitarian, following an ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham (his mentor). He believed that the quality of pleasure an act produced was more important than the quantity.
Nuclear deterrence	The belief that the possession of an arsenal of nuclear weapons defends a state from attack by another state, merely on the basis of a threat to deploy such weapons.
Principle of utility	Bentham developed the principle of utility (greatest happiness principle), which states that actions are right if it produces 'greatest happiness for the greatest number.'
Relativism	The view that there are no universal moral norms, but that an action should be judged right or wrong depending on the social, cultural and individual circumstances in each situation; one of Fletcher's four working principles.
Rule Utilitarianism	Theory of Utilitarianism based on general principles or rules of behaviour; a view associated with J. S. Mill. Rule Utilitarians believe that by using the utilitarian principle – the greatest happiness for the greatest number – one can draw up general rules, based on past experiences, which would help to keep this principle. Rules like 'respect the property of others' or 'do not steal' would help people to keep the utilitarian principle, so should be obeyed.