



## Fundamentals – GCSE Religious Studies - Themes

### Key knowledge by the end of the course

Students should also have the key knowledge of the beliefs and practices of two religions

### THEMATIC STUDIES: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies

#### Theme B: Religion and Life

##### The origins and value of the universe

The origins of the universe, including:

- religious teachings about the origins of the universe, and different interpretations of these
  - the relationship between scientific views, such as the Big Bang theory, and religious views.
  - The value of the world and the duty of human beings to protect it, including religious teaching about stewardship, dominion, responsibility, awe and wonder.
  - The use and abuse of the environment, including the use of natural resources, pollution.
- The use and abuse of animals, including:

- animal experimentation
- the use of animals for food.

##### The origins and value of human life

The origins of life, including:

- religious teachings about the origins of human life, and different interpretations of these
- the relationship between scientific views, such as evolution, and religious views.
- The concepts of sanctity of life and the quality of life.
- Abortion, including situations when the mother's life is at risk.
- Ethical arguments related to abortion, including those based on the sanctity of life and quality of life.
- Euthanasia.
- Beliefs about death and an afterlife, and their impact on beliefs about the value of human life.

#### Theme C: The existence of God and revelation

##### Philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God

- The Design argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.
- The First Cause argument, including its strengths and weaknesses.
- The argument from miracles, including its strengths and weaknesses, and one example of a miracle.
- Evil and suffering as an argument against the existence of God.
- Arguments based on science against the existence of God.

##### The nature of the divine and revelation

- Special revelation as a source of knowledge about the divine (God, gods or ultimate reality) including visions and one example of a vision.
- Enlightenment as a source of knowledge about the divine.
- General revelation: nature and scripture as a way of understanding the divine.
- Different ideas about the divine that come from these sources:
  - omnipotent and omniscient
  - personal and impersonal
  - immanent and transcendent.



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- The value of general and special revelation and enlightenment as sources of knowledge about the divine, including:
  - the problems of different ideas about the divine arising from these experiences
  - alternative explanations for the experiences, and the possibility that the people who claimed to have them were lying or mistaken.

### **Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict**

#### Religion, violence, terrorism and war

The meaning and significance of:

- peace
- justice
- forgiveness
- reconciliation.
- Violence, including violent protest.
- Terrorism.
- Reasons for war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation.
- The just war theory, including the criteria for a just war.
- Holy war.
- Pacifism.

#### Religion and belief in 21st century conflict

- Religion and belief as a cause of war and violence in the contemporary world.
- Nuclear weapons, including nuclear deterrence.
- The use of weapons of mass destruction.
- Religion and peace-making in the contemporary world including the work of individuals influenced by religious teaching.
- Religious responses to the victims of war including the work of one present day religious organisation.

### **Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment**

#### Religion, crime and the causes of crime

- Good and evil intentions and actions, including whether it can ever be good to cause suffering.

Reasons for crime, including:

- poverty and upbringing
- mental illness and addiction
- greed and hate
- opposition to an unjust law.
- Views about people who break the law for these reasons.
- Views about different types of crime, including hate crimes, theft and murder.

#### Religion and punishment

The aims of punishment, including:

- retribution
- deterrence
- reformation.

The treatment of criminals, including:

- prison
- corporal punishment



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- community service.
- Forgiveness.
- The death penalty.
- Ethical arguments related to the death penalty, including those based on the principle of utility and sanctity of life.

### Key skills by the end of the course

Be able to define key words relating to religious, ethical and philosophical themes

Explain key Christian beliefs relating to the themes

Explain key Jewish beliefs relating to:

- Abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation
- Visions, miracles, nature as general revelation
- Violence, weapons of mass destruction, pacifism
- Corporal punishment, death penalty, forgiveness

Explain contrasting beliefs within the religions

Explain the influence of religion on individuals, communities and societies

Explain the significance of religious beliefs on religious believers

Apply knowledge and understanding of key teachings including quotes

Evaluate different religious and secular views

Construct well-informed and balanced arguments

Spell, and punctuate with considerable accuracy

Use the rules of grammar to ensure clarity of meaning

Use a wide range of specialist vocabulary