

RE Knowledge Organiser: Christianity Marriage and the family

The importance and purpose of marriage for Christians

- Jesus believed in monogamy and that marriage should be between one man and one woman
- The Christian Church follows Jesus in teaching that God created woman and man for each other and that marriage is a life long relationship

Christian Church teach that God created marriage

- So that a couple can have a lifelong relationship of love and faithfulness
- So that a couple can have the support and comfort of each other and enjoy sex in a the way God intended for procreation of children
- So that children can be brought up in a Christian family
- As a way for the couple to show their love for each other and to gain God's grace to help them in their married life

Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic and Orthodox churches, because of this, Catholic marriage involves not just the bride and groom and also God himself. Even though in Catholicism monks and nun are forbidden to marry, marriage is very important because:

- Marriage was created by God as the way of establishing and preserving society
- Marriage is the only acceptable way for Christians to have a sexual relationship

"...a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (mark 10:6-8)

"....what God has joined together, let no man separate" (Mark 10:9-10)

"...Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery" (mark 10:11)

How Christians respond to non – religious attitudes to marriage and cohabitation

Three different responses from the Churches:

- Roman Catholic Church; condemn the non religious attitudes and insist Christians should refrain from having sex until that have a Christian marriage
- Liberal Protestants; accept couples living together before marriage, but expect couples to marry before starting a family. Will only accept sex to be between a couple committed to a long term relationship: 'recognising that for many, this is a step along the way to the fuller commitment of marriage' (*Something to celebrate*, a report published by the CoE 1997)
- Most under 40 churchgoers respond by ignoring the Church's teaching. For example in the USA 2014 61% of Christians would have sex before marriage and 56% thought it appropriate to move in with someone after dating for six months.

Key Terms	Definitions
Monogamy	Marriage to only one person at a time
Lifelong relationship	The idea that marriage can only be ended by the death of a partner
Procreation	Making a new life
Sacraments	An outward ceremony through which God's grace is given
Grace	God's gift which gives strength to be good and holy
Cohabitation	Living together in a sexual relationship without being married
Spouse	Marriage/cohabitation partner
adultery	A sexual act between a married person and someone who is not their marriage partner
Sacred bond	A joining together sanctified by God which cannot be broken

Humanist and atheist attitudes to marriage

Humanists believe sex and marriage are matters for the individual decisions. It is up to individuals whether they live together without marrying or get married in a civil ceremony. However, humanists expect sexual relationships to be based on respect and trust. They believe the relationship should be exclusive and many believe marriage is a good thing when raising a family because it provides:

- A stable environment – legally and financially
- More social acceptance of the relationship
- More stable home for the family
- A public ritual to declare and celebrate a couple's love

It is now socially quite acceptable for couples to live together without being married; 5.9 million people were cohabiting in 2012; doubled that of 1996. 80% of 30 – year olds say they have cohabited at some point in their lives

*Marriage is still important to the non – religious! In 2012, the number of marriages in England and Wales actually increased by 5.3%. In 2013 the Marriage Act came about which now allows same sex couples to marry in just the same way as a heterosexual couple, however it did not require religions to provide same sex ceremonies.

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Sexual Relationships

Christian teachings:

- Christianity teaches that sex is a gift from God to be enjoyed between one man and one woman who are married to each other.
- Christianity teaches that sex was given to humans by God for the joy, pleasure and bonding of a married couple and for the procreation of children

Sex outside marriage

Most Christians are opposed to any form of sexual relationship outside of marriage because:

- The Bible says that fornication is sinful and Christians should follow the teachings of the Bible
 - The Catechism teaches that premarital sex is wrong and Catholics are encouraged to follow the teachings of the Church
 - All Christians are against adultery because it breaks the wedding vows to be faithful to each other. It also goes against one of the Ten Commandments, which all Christians should follow
 - Adultery is condemned by Jesus in the Gospels and all Christians follow His teachings
- Some Christians accept that some couples may live together before getting married and therefore have premarital sex. Liberal protestants in particular do not regard sex before marriage as sinful (as long as they are in a committed relationship), although they would expect couples to marry before starting a family

Humanist and Atheist views

Although humanist and atheists do not disagree with sex before marriage, premarital sex is acceptable only with certain limits:

- Sex must be consensual – rape in any form is seen as completely unacceptable
- Sex must be between two people 'of age'; Paedophilia is regarded as wrong regardless of religious teachings
- A sexual partner must ideally be single. Non religious people may find cheating on a partner offensive
- No payment should be involved in sex
- Sex should involve a degree of stability. High levels of promiscuity are frowned upon
- Sex ought to be safe; given the risk of disease and pregnancy; a barrier form of contraception must be used

Most atheists would agree and have similar views, however they may not object to multiple sexual partners.

Key Terms	Definitions
Premarital Sex	Sexual activity before marriage
Homosexuality	Sexual attraction to someone of the same sex
Extramarital Sex	Sex acts outside of marriage – usually referred to as adultery
Promiscuity	Having sex with a number of partners without commitment
Faithfulness	Staying with your marriage partner and having sex only with them
Fornication	A word used in religion for both premarital sex and promiscuity
Consensual sex	With both parties freely agree to sexual activity
stonewall	A charity group which campaigns for equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain

Homosexuality

- Various changes in the laws have made it easier to be openly homosexual and have made society more aware and accepting of homosexuality
- Medical research has shown that homosexuality is most likely to be caused by genetic and hormonal factors when a boy develops
- As society began to recognise homosexuality as acceptable, more institutions began to grant equal rights and status for homosexual couples
- Increased openness of gay celebrities has led to greater acceptance
- Organisations such as stonewall have changed many people's attitude and led to great equal rights

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Christian Attitudes to same sex relationships

Catholic Attitude:

Most Catholics believe that being homosexual is not a sin but that homosexual sexual relationships are sinful. The Catholic Church asks homosexuals to live without sexual activity. The Church does not accept same sex marriage, but is less opposed to civil partnerships. However the Church also teaches that it is sinful to harass homosexuals or attack their behaviour. Catholics have this attitude because:

- The Bible condemns homosexual activity
- The tradition of the Church is that sexual activity should be creative and it is not possible for homosexual couples to have sex with creative purposes
- The catechism teaches that marriage is for a man and a woman to join as one and to raise a family
- The Church teaches that people can not help their sexual orientation but they can control their sexual behaviour, therefore discriminating against people for their sexual orientation is wrong
- The Bible teaches that everyone has human dignity because they are made in the image of God

Christian Attitudes to same sex relationships

Evangelical Protestants Attitude:

Many Evangelical Protestant believe that homosexuality is a sin. They believe that there should be no homosexual Christians and some hold special prayer meeting to give homosexuals the power of the Spirit to change their sexual preference. Reasons being:

- They believe the Bible is the direct word of God – the Bible condemns homosexuality in some passages of both the old and new testament
- They believe the salvation of Christ can remove all sins, including homosexuality
- They believe homosexuality is sinful because all Churches have taught it in the past, even though some now say it is acceptable

***The Evangelical Alliance has recently made this statement: “At the same time we utterly repudiate homophobia and call upon Churches to welcome those of homosexual orientation as they would welcome any other person”**

Christian responses to the non – religious attitudes

The official response of the Roman Catholic Church and the conservative Protestant Churches has been to condemn the non-religious attitude and to insist that Christian homosexuals should refrain from having sex and the same sex marriages should not be legal.

The official response of the more liberal Protestant Churches has been to welcome homosexuals into the Church and to allow gay clergy to become bishops. Quakers in Britain give homosexuals completely equal rights and celebrate gay marriages. (Some liberal Churches insist that gay clergy should refrain from sexual activities) Most Christians no longer agree with the official teachings. In May 2015, Ireland, perhaps one of the most Catholic countries in Europe, held a referendum on whether to allow same sex marriages and it was approved by 62% of the voters. All research seems to show that most Christians are more in line with non religious attitudes when it comes to homosexuality

Key Terms	Definitions
Civil partnership	Legal ceremonies giving homosexual partners the same legal rights as husband and wife
Homophobia	Hatred or fear of homosexuals

Christian Attitudes to same sex relationships

Liberal Protestant attitude

Many Liberal Protestants have the attitude that lifelong homosexual relationships are acceptable and homosexuals are welcome into the Church. They are generally happy to provide blessings for civil partnerships but not same sex marriages, which they believe cannot be equated to Christian Marriage. Reasons being:

- They believe the teachings of the Bible need reinterpreting in the light of modern knowledge.
- They feel that the major Christian belief in love and acceptance means that homosexuals must be accepted
- Recent scientific research shows that homosexuality may be caused by biological factors and so is part of a person’s nature.
- They believe Christians should be open and honest, and refusing rights to gay Christians encourages them to be dishonest and hypocritical about their nature and life.

****However some Protestants, such as Quakers are happy to celebrate same sex marriages in their churches. They are happy for homosexuals to be ministers and priests.**

Humanist and Atheist attitudes to same sex

Humanists, and the vast majority of atheists and non-religious people, see no problems with same sex sexual relationships. They regard people’s sexuality as their own concern unless it interferes with other people’s humans rights. This could be because all the Christian arguments against same sex relationships are based on religious reasons, so if people have no religion then the reasons for disapproving of homosexuality disappear

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Families

Through out history there have been many different types of family; from small clans (large extended families) to families with polygamous parents, to families with monogamous parents. Families have developed as children can not survive on their own until adulthood.

Families

Nuclear Family

Technically a nuclear family is one where a mother, father and children are living together as a unit. Most religious people view it as a married couple of opposite sex living together with their children. Fifty years ago, such a nuclear family was regarded as the normal family. However of the 7.9 million families with dependant children, in UK 2014, only 4.75 million were married couple families. Two million families consist of a single parent and dependant children and 1.17 million families are headed by cohabitating couples. (statistics from the ONS)

Families

Single Parent Families

In the UK there were 1.9 million families consisting of single parent and dependant children. 25% of all families with dependant children are single parent families. The main cause of the large number of single parent families has been the significant number of divorces and the increasing number of family breakdown where couples are cohabiting. However, the divorce rate has reduced over the past few years. Overall 42% of families will end in divorce. Single parent families allow children to escape from the emotional stress that can be caused when parents are quarrelling. However, single parent families often have financial problems: 41% of children living in one parent families are living in poverty compared to only 23% of children from two parent families. Most lone parents are women, so many children in single parent families lack a paternal role. (statistics from the ONS)

Families

Blended Families

A blended family is when two separate families are joined together when parents decided to marry or cohabit. The increase in divorce since 1969 has lead to an increase in remarriage - most people who have divorced before the age of 50 have remarried., resulting in many more blended families, also known as step families or reconstituted families.

Key Terms

Definitions

Polygamous

Having more than one spouse at a time

Monogamous

Having only one spouse at a time

ONS

Office of National Statistics

Families

Same-sex Families

The Civil Partnership Act of 2004 provided same sex couples with the same rights and treatment as opposite-sex couples who enter into a civil marriage. The Marriage Act (Same Sex couples) 2013 allowed same sex couples to marry in just the same way as heterosexual couples, but does not require religions to provide same sex marriage ceremonies. The Equality Act 2010 made discriminating against same sex couples illegal, so giving them equal adoption and fostering rights.

In 2014 there were 21,000 families headed by a same sex couple. Of these 12,000 were in civil partnerships and 90000 were cohabiting. (statistics from the ONS)

Families

Extended Families

An extended is one where three generations (Parents, children and grandparents) are living in the same house or one where parents, children, grandparents, aunts and uncles live in close proximity and have frequent contact with and reliance on each other. The families are often called multigenerational families. According to the 2011 census, only 1% of families with dependant children were multigenerational, but research indicates that many more live in close proximity and rely on grandparents and other family members for childcare. This increase since the 2011 census could be because of the squeeze on incomes and jobs, and the increased cost of housing and both child care and elderly care.

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The purpose and importance of the family in Christianity

All Christians believe that the family was created by God as the basic unit of society and as the only place in which children should be brought up.

One of the main purposes of Christian marriage is to have children and bring them up in a secure and loving Christian environment so that they will come to love God and follow Jesus. Family is also important because:

- The family is a place where children are introduced to the faith through baptism/dedication and then through being taken to church for worship, Sunday school, festivals etc
- The family has the basic task of bringing children up safely and securely until they are mature enough to look after themselves.
- The family has a duty of instilling moral values into the children so that they become good responsible citizens.
- Children have a duty to look after their parents when their parents are too old or infirm to care for themselves. The Commandments tell Christians to honour their mother and father
- Christian teaching on divorce makes it clear that Christian parents should stay together and bring up their children together because the family is so important

For many Christians, family is considered to be the most important part of society and with the family society would collapse.

However, there is a tradition dating back to Jesus, which says that there are more important things than the family for Christians. Marriage is not compulsory for Christians and many Christians feel they can serve God best by remaining single, for example Roman Catholic priests, nuns and monks leave their families to serve God.

Key Terms	Definitions

Non Religious ideas about the family

Most families in the UK are now non religious. All recent surveys show that at least 60% of people have little or no contact with religion. However, the family is very important to people regardless of religion. Falling in love and having children is a goal in life for most people. The purpose of family life is to bring up children in a safe and secure environment, pass on moral values and to provide emotional financial support. The importance of family life to non religious people can be seen in the same way that family members want to help in time of need, regardless of religious commitment. Non religious families also come together at times like Christmas just as much as religious families.

Different Christian attitudes to the family

The traditional Christian view of the family is that outlined above, but other Christians have different views:

- Some Christians believe that the purpose of the family is to provide love and security and to make sure that children are educated to think for themselves so that they can make their own minds about religion when they are old enough. These Christians believe it is not the role of the family to make Christians.
- Other Christians believe that while it is the duty of parents to provide love, security, education and a Christian upbringing. It is not the duty of the children to obey their parents. A Christian family should encourage children to develop their own ideas, which may lead to different ideas from their parents.

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Support for the family in the local parish

What is a Parish?

The parish is an area around a local church. The Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches have an organisation based on parishes and dioceses. A diocese is a collection of parishes under the jurisdiction of a bishop. E.g the Bishop of London is head of the London Diocese and its 413 parishes.

Each parish has a Parish Priest (Usually known as a vicar in the Church of England) and centres around a parish church (the church for the local area)

Support for the family in the local parish

How the Parish tries to help families

Parishes try to help families because they have a duty to help children baptised or dedicated into the Church. There are a number of ways in which parishes help and support families

- Local Church primary and secondary schools – these provide Christian education and worship alongside the standard education. The school buildings are provided and maintained by the Church. The teachers and equipment are paid for by the state
- Many Churches are exploring new ways to be more family friendly. Churches believe that family life can be strengthened by families worshipping together. Family worship helps to unite the family and gives families the opportunity to discover religion together
- Sunday schools – where children can learn about the Christian faith in a child centred environment while their parents attend church.
- Parishes also help families through Rites of Passage – for example; baptism where the priest/minister will meet with the family before the sacrament and gives advice and guidance.
- Confirmation classes – are run for children before they are confirmed or in the Roman Catholic church – before their First holy Communion. These classes help parents with the Christian upbringing of their children as they bring their children into full membership of the church.
- Most parishes offer help with parents/couples keeping their marriage vows – this is done through counselling.

Key Terms	Definitions
Parish	Local community
Diocese	A Church area under the direction of a Bishop
Parish Priest	The clergy person for a local church
Vicar	Another name for a parish priest
Clergy	Those ordained by the Church
First communion	First time a person receives the sacrament of the Eucharist (Children receive lessons before the special ceremony)

How the Parish tries to help families cont.

- There are also counselling services such as: 'Good News Family Care', Catholic Marriage Care, the National Catholic Child Welfare Council and the Children's Society (CoE) Diocese in the CoE have special children and family officers to provide help for families in the diocese.
- Most Church services include prayers for families and for spiritual strength for parents to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Many Churches run toddler groups and Messy Church to help parents with young children to socialise and learn from each other
- Many parishes run groups such as cubs, brownies, guides, scouts etc which encourage children to become good citizens. Some parishes run youth groups to keep children safe and away from bad influences.
- The Churches are trying to ensure that the needs of young people are attended to by establishing such groups as the Methodist Youth Conference, Church of England Youth Council and International Anglican Youth Network

Why do parishes try to help families?

- Parishes have a duty to help children baptised or dedicated to the church
- The Church teaches that one of the main purposes of marriage is to have children and raise them in a secure and loving place – the Parish must be able to help provide this.
- The Church has a social duty to help parents bring their children up in a Christian environment
- The family is the place where children are introduced to the religion. If the parish does not help with this Christianity will not grow

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Family Planning

Contraception is something that allows a couple to have sex without conception occurring. Allowing a couple to control the number of children they have. The use of contraception in the West has become very popular (it is estimated that 90% of the sexually active population of childbearing age in the UK use some form of contraception.) People try to control the number of children they have for many reasons:

- For the health of the mother
- To avoid the risk of not being able to provide for the existing family
- To maintain good standards of living for the family unit

Types of contraception:

Males condom, female condom, diaphragms, caps, combined contraceptive pill, progestogen only pill, contraceptive injections, contraceptive implant, intrauterine device....

For women who have had unprotected sex, there are two types of emergency contraceptive pill ('morning after pill') Levonelle has to be taken within three days of having sex and ellaOne has to be taken within five days of having sex. Both pills work by preventing or delaying ovulation, Emergency contraception does not protect against sexually transmitted infections!

Condoms, as well as being effective contraceptives, are the only form of contraception which can prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections/diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Artificial methods can be used without much planning and in an form of sexual relationship. However, they do involve wither changes to the woman's body or interfering with the normal sexual process, methods such the IUD, IUS and the morning after pill, which prevent the fertilised egg from attaching itself to the womb wall, are often called abortifacients because they bring about a very early abortion.

Natural Methods of contraception:

The most common form of natural contraception is know as **natural family planning** (NFP) or fertility awareness. It involves reducing the chance of becoming pregnant by planning sex around the most fertile times during the woman's monthly cycle.

Another method of natural contraception uses devices to measure hormone levels in the woman's urine. If used according to the instructions, these methods can be 94% effective.

Natural methods require the couple to be in a loving, stable relationship as they require planning and sufficient love and concern for the partner to give up sex at certain times of the month, AS they are natural they do not involve any drugs or any risks of promoting early abortions. Natural methods do not prevent STDs.

Key Terms	Definitions
Conception	Creating a life
Contraception	Artificial barrier which prevents conception (pregnancy)
Childbearing age	The age when a woman is capable of having children
condoms	Thin rubber sheaths protecting against conception and STDs
IUD	Intrauterine device (the coil); a type of contraception
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
Abortifacients	Substances that bring about a very early abortion (morning after pill)
NFP	Natural family planning
Unitive Purpose	Sexual activity as a source of joy and pleasure to unite a married couple
Creative Purpose	Sex as a means of creating a family
Maternal	To do with the mother
Paternal	To do with the father

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Christian attitudes to contraception

There are two main attitudes to contraception among Christians:

1) The Catholic attitude

The Catholic Church teaches that sexual intercourse is a gift from God as a source of joy and pleasure to married couples (The unitive purpose) as well as a means of creating a family (the creative purpose). The Church also teaches that Christians should practice responsible parenthood by deciding on the number of children to have and when to have them. However, the Catholic way to achieve this is through using natural methods of family planning. The Church teaches that using artificial methods of contraception is going against God's intentions. They believe this because:

- In 1968, Pope Paul VI affirmed the teachings of Pope Pius XI which condemned all forms of artificial contraception, and the teaching of Pope Pius XII who declared that Catholics could use natural methods of contraception as these were part of God's creation.
- Artificial methods separate the unitive AND creative aspects of sex, which is not what God intended.
- Some contraceptives have abortifacient effects and so are against the teachings of the Church.
- The Catholic Church regards contraception as a major cause of sexual promiscuity, broken families and the rise in the divorce rate and STDs

2) The attitude of non – Catholic Christians

Almost all non – Catholic Christians believe that all forms of contraception are permissible as long as they are used to restrict family size and not simply to stop having children altogether. They have this attitude because:

- Christianity is about love and justice, and contraception improves maternal health and raises the standard of living of children as families are smaller
- God created sex for enjoyment and to cement the bonds of marriage. Within marriage, contraception allows the role of sex to be separate from making children and this is not against God's will.
- There is nothing in the Bible that forbids the use of contraception.
- Non-Catholic Christians believe that it is better to combat HIV/AIDS by using condoms rather

Humanist and Atheist attitudes to contraception

Are in favour of contraception because they assess the rights and wrongs of birth control by looking at its consequences. They argue that as contraception prevent unwanted children from being born, improves the material and emotional standard of living in families and prevents the spread of STDs; it must be morally right to use it.

Humanists argue that if contraception 'results in every child being a wanted child, and in better, healthier lives for women, it must be a good thing' (British Humanist Association)

Situation Ethics

Situation Ethics is the belief that Christians should make moral decisions based on looking at the moral situation and deciding which choice would give the most loving outcome. This is based on the teaching of Jesus; that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love your neighbour. Christians who believe in Situation Ethics would say that people should use contraception because it:

- Improves the health and well being of the woman
- Prevents many children suffering, because every child will be a wanted child
- By reducing the rates of unintended pregnancies; it reduces the need for unsafe abortions
- Reduces the risk of unintended pregnancies among women living with HIV, resulting in fewer infected babies and orphans
- Provides dual protection against unintended pregnancies and against STIs including HIV if using male and female condoms

Christian responses to non religious attitudes to contraception

As Protestant and Orthodox Christians agree with the non religious attitudes to contraception, it is only the Roman Catholic Church which has responded to them. The church continues to issue statements to Catholic couples that they must only use natural methods of contraception. However, a lot of Catholics seem to have responded by accepting the non religious attitudes. A survey in the US questioned more than 12,000 Catholics in twelve countries. It discovered that 78% supported the use of artificial birth control

Key Terms	Definitions
Situation Ethics	Christian belief in following Jesus' teaching of love thy neighbour; basing each situation on whether it is the most loving thing to do
Creative Purpose	Sex as a mean to create a family
Unitive Purpose	Sexual activity as a source of joy and pleasure to unite a married couple

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Divorce and remarriage

In the 1950's there were 30 thousand divorces in the UK, by 2012 there were over 118 thousand. Clearly attitudes to divorce changed greatly between 1950 and now.

This could be because:

- New laws made divorce much cheaper and easier to obtain
- Increased equality meant that women were no longer prepared to treat unequal treatment from men
- Equal rights laws meant many women were financially independent and could afford to live well after divorce

Although 42% of marriage are likely to end in divorce in the UK; 58% are not and around 10% of married couples should reach their diamond anniversary- (60 years of marriage!!)

Until 2000, most people who divorced remarried within ten years of their divorce. However, remarriage has declined as more divorced people are choosing to cohabit instead.

Christian teachings on divorce

In some places in the Gospels, Jesus seems to ban divorce and remarriage but in others seems to allow divorce on the grounds of adultery.

"...Therefore what God has joined together, let no separate..." (Mark 10:9)

".... I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery" (Matthew 19:3 – 9)

St Paul says Christians should not divorce, but if they do they must not remarry.

"To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else reconcile with her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10)

The Catholic attitude

The Catholic Church does not allow religious divorce or remarriage. Catholics see marriage as a sacrament and the exchange of vows means that the only way a marriage between baptised Catholics can end (religiously) is by the death of one of the partners or if the marriage is annulled.

The Catholic Church does not allow for the legal separation of spouses and in the eyes of God they are still married. And so cannot remarry.

As there can not be religious divorce, there cannot be religious remarriage because that would be the same as bigamy and adultery; both of which are considered a very serious sin.

Key Terms	Definitions
Sacrament	An outward ceremony through which God's grace is given
Civil divorce	A divorce according to the law of the country but not the Church
Annulment	A declaration by the Church that a marriage was never a true marriage and so the partners are free to marry
Consummate	Complete a marriage through sexual intercourse
Covenant	A religious agreement made between God and a religious group/person

Non Catholic views:

Most non – Catholic Churches think that divorce is wrong, but allow it if the marriage has broken down. Most of these Churches allow divorced people to remarry.

- Jesus allowed divorce in Matthew 19:9
- They believe that there are certain situations where Christians must choose 'the lesser of two evils'. If a marriage has really broken down then the effects of the couple not divorcing would be a greater evil than the 'evil' of divorce.
- Christians allow forgiveness and a new chance if they confess their sins and are truly repentant. This belief in forgiveness should apply to divorce and remarriage as much as anything else.

Atheist and Humanist views

Atheists do not believe in God and so they regard marriage as a purely human and legal institution. Some atheists do not believe in marriage and would cohabit and so would have no need to divorce. Many atheists would have the same attitude towards divorce and remarriage and most humanists (who are mainly atheists):

- All married couples should have the right to divorce if they feel the marriage has failed
- Divorce should make sure that the spouses are treated equally in the financial arrangements
- Divorce should make sure that any children are well provided for
- Any divorce person should be treated as a single person and so have the right to remarry if they so wish

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Situation ethics regarding divorce

Christians, Humanists and atheists often apply an ethical theory to deal with divorce and remarriage. One such theory is Situation Ethics. This is the theory which began with an American Christian thinker; Joseph Fletcher. Fletcher taught that although the rules of the Bible or the Church are important, they can sometimes be altered by a situation. For example; the Bible and the Church say that stealing is wrong. However if we found a madman who had gained possession of a nuclear weapon, it would surely be right to steal the weapon from him!

People who apply Situation Ethics look at the situation, decide on the pros and cons of the possible choices and then determine what would be THE MOST LOVING THING TO DO.

So, in the case of divorce;

Advantage

- It brings domestic peace and emotional security as it removes the conflict
- It ends children's exposure to damaging parental conflict
- It gives a chance for a fresh start for the spouses and the opportunities for new, better relationships

Disadvantages:

- It is expensive – apart from the legal costs, divorce usually means selling the family home
- It can hurt children as they are forced to choose between parents and may have to select which one to live with
- It hurts family relatives as they often lose contact with the children if their relation is not awarded custody
- It causes stress

Equality of men and women in the family

Christians have different attitudes to the roles of men and women in the family. This could be because the bible has three different teachings:

- Genesis 1 teaches the equality of men and women as they were created at the same time and were both created in the image of God. ***“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”*** (Gen 1:27)
- However, in Genesis 2 and 3 it says that woman was created after man and out of his rib, therefore, woman is 'subordinate' to man. These chapters also explain that evil came into the world as the fault of Eve as she was persuaded by the serpent(devil) and she then persuaded Adam. As a result, God says to the woman: “I will make your pains in childbearing severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you” (Gen 3:16)
- St Paul says in Ephesian 5:21-30 that wives should submit to their husband because the husband is the head of the wife in the same way that Christ is head of the Church. This implies that the wife should do as she is told by the husband. However St Paul also says that husbands should love their wives in the same way they love their own bodies. However, his words that a husband should feed and care for his body implies that men should feed and care for their wives, reinforcing the subservience of women

Evangelical Protestant:

Teach that men and women have separate and different roles. It is the role of the woman to bring up children and run a Christian home. The role of the man is to provide for the family and lead the family in religion.

Liberal Protestant:

Now accept that men and women are equal and should have equal roles in life and the family.

Catholics:

Teaches that men and women should have equal roles in life and family – based on Genesis 1:27, the Church teaches that men and women have equal status in the sight of God.

Atheist and Humanist attitudes to equal roles of men and women in the family

Atheists would tend to have the same attitudes to equal roles as the general, non religious population. However, their opinions have changed greatly. In 1965; 85% of men agreed that the 'man's job is to earn money, a woman's job is to look after the home and family.' in 1989 only 32% of men agreed with the statement, and by 2008 only 17% of men agreed.

The most common non religious attitude is that men and women have equal role in the family. The main reasons for the change are:

- The development of equal rights for women (sex discrimination is now illegal, there is the equal pay act and the sex discrimination act)
- Social and industrial developments in the 50's and 60's led to more women workers needed
- The work of the suffragettes and the feminist movements to gain equal voting and political rights for women showed men in authority that women were no longer prepared to be mistreated

RE Knowledge Organiser: Christianity Marriage and the family

Gender prejudice and discrimination

Gender prejudice is believing that one sex is superior to another based on feelings rather than an assessment of evidence.

Gender discrimination is putting the prejudice into practice and treating people differently because of their sex .

Sexism is discrimination , prejudice or stereotyping on the basis of gender. It is mostly expressed towards girls and women.

Divergent Christian views about gender prejudice and discrimination

It is sometimes said that Christianity is full of gender prejudice because :

- God is described as a man
- All of the great heroes of the Bible were men
- Jesus chose only men for his disciples
- All the writers of the books of the Bible were men

Evangelical Protestants

- Evangelical Protestants teach that men and women have separate and different roles and therefore cannot have equal rights in religion.
- Women should not speak in church, they should not teach and they should be submissive to their husbands.
- Men should provide for their family and lead out in worship.
- Men should love their wives as themselves
- They believe that this is not discrimination because God ordained it.
- The story of Adam and Eve shows that men are more important because Adam was created first.

The Catholic Church*+

- The Catholic Church is against gender prejudice and discrimination.
- They teach that men and women should have equal roles in life and equal rights in society.
- Genesis1:27 teaches that God created both man and woman in His image.
- The Catholic Catechism teaches that men and women are should have equal rights in life and society.
- Women are able to study and teach in their theological colleges.
- Women can officiate Holy Communion services.
- The Roman Catholic however teaches that only men can be ordained priests as the priest represents Jesus at the Mass.

Liberal Protestants

- Women should have equal roles in the family , equal rights in life and in the church.
- God created male and female at the same time and of equal status
- The letters of Paul teaches that Christ is neither male or female
- Jesus treated women equally
- Evidence proves that there were women priest in the early Church.
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Atheist and Humanist Views

- Humanists are against sexism and have been keen supporters in promoting women rights.
- The pressure for equal pay for women and end to sex discrimination came from non religious politicians.
- Men and women are equal and should have equal rights.
- It is wrong for religion to discriminate against women. Refusing to ordain women should be illegal.

Prejudice and Discrimination in the UK

- 65% of adults agreed that sexism is still a problem in the UK (YouGov survey 2014)
- On average , 2 women per week are killed by a violent partner or ex-partner (Department of Health 2005)
- Up to 3 million women and girls in the UK experience rape, domestic violence, stalking or other violence each year (academic research 2009).
- Almost one in three girls experience unwanted sexual toughing in schools (YouGov survey 2010).

Keywords

Ordained- either set down by God or to be made a priest
Catholic Catechism- the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church