GENERAL

aqa b gcse religious studies revision unit 2 religion and life issues religion and life issues and religion and morality exam revision notes

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Introduction

Preparing for the AQA B GCSE Religious Studies exam can feel daunting, especially when you're tackling Unit 2, "Religion and Life Issues." This unit dives into the ways religion intersects with contemporary social debates, moral dilemmas, and personal choices. Whether you're a student looking to sharpen your revision notes or a tutor seeking a comprehensive resource, this guide offers a structured, SEO friendly overview that covers the essential concepts, exam techniques, and practical study strategies.

Overview of Unit 2 – Religion and Life Issues

Unit 2 is designed to explore how different faith traditions respond to modern challenges. The key focus areas are:

- Sexuality and relationships
- Health and well being
- Human life and death
- Social justice and environmental stewardship

These themes are examined through the lenses of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, and other faiths, providing a comparative perspective that is central to the AQA B exam.

Core Learning Objectives

Students should be able to:

1. Explain how religion influences attitudes towards contemporary life issues.
2. Analyse the role of religious teachings in shaping moral arguments.
3. Compare different religious responses to similar societal challenges.
4. Evaluate the impact of religion on individual and collective decision making.

Key Concepts and Themes

Below are the major concepts you'll encounter in Unit 2, each accompanied by concise notes that can be copied into your revision sheets.

1. Sexuality and Relationships

Christianity: Emphasis on marriage as a covenant; teachings on contraception vary by denomination.

Islam: Marriage is a contract; premarital sex is prohibited; discussions around gender roles.

Hinduism: Traditional emphasis on marriage and family; modern debates on same sex marriage and divorce.

Buddhism: Focus on personal ethics; no explicit doctrine on sexual conduct.

Sikhism: Encourages fidelity and chastity; community support for marital harmony.

2. Health and Well Being

Christianity: Views on abortion vary; many denominations support palliative care.

Islam: Generally opposes abortion except in specific circumstances; encourages holistic health practices.

Hinduism: Emphasises Ayurveda and yoga; attitudes towards Western medicine differ.

Buddhism: Promotes mindfulness and compassion; encourages balanced lifestyle.

Sikhism: Advocates for communal health initiatives and voluntary service.

3. Human Life and Death

Christianity: Sanctity of life; debates on euthanasia and organ donation.

Islam: Life is sacred; euthanasia generally prohibited; organ donation accepted if it saves lives.

Hinduism: Reincarnation; emphasis on non violence; debates on euthanasia.

Buddhism: Non attachment; euthanasia is discouraged; focus on compassionate end of life care.

Sikhism: Life is a gift; euthanasia is disallowed; encourages service until death.

4. Social Justice and the Environment

Christianity: Stewardship of Earth; social justice movements rooted in faith.

Islam: Ummah responsibility; environmental ethics in Qur'an and Hadith.

Hinduism: Ahimsa extends to nature; emphasis on sustainable living.

Buddhism: Interdependence; ecological mindfulness.

Sikhism: Equality, community service, and environmental stewardship.

Comparative Analysis Techniques

Examiners expect you to compare and contrast religious responses. Use the **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) or **PESTLE**(Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental) frameworks to structure your essays.

Example Comparison Outline

1. Topic – "Abortion: Christian vs. Islamic perspectives."
2. Key Points – Provide doctrinal basis, scriptural references, and contemporary debates.
3. Analysis – Discuss how each tradition's stance influences policy and individual choices.
4. Conclusion – Reflect on similarities, differences, and potential areas for dialogue.

Exam Revision Strategies

Effective revision hinges on a mix of content mastery and exam technique. Here's how to structure your study plan.

1. Build a Knowledge Base

- Use flashcards for key terms and scripture references.
- Summarise each religion's stance in a one page table.
- Highlight common themes across faiths.

2. Practice Past Papers

Past papers are the gold standard for understanding exam expectations. Focus on:

1. Answering short answer questions within 3 4 minutes.
2. Writing structured essays with clear introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions.
3. Using evidence from the syllabus (scripture, teachings, contemporary examples).

3. Time Management

During the exam, allocate your time as follows:

- Reading the question – 5 minutes.
- Planning – 5 minutes.
- Writing – 45 minutes.
- Review – 5 minutes.

4. Revision Notes Format

Use a clean, hierarchical structure in your notes:

1. Heading (H2) – Main theme.
2. Sub heading (H3) – Specific aspect.
3. Bullet points – Key facts and examples.
4. Highlight – Use bold for critical points.

Sample Exam Questions and Model Answers

Below are representative questions from recent AQA B exams, along with concise model answers that demonstrate the expected depth and structure.

Question 1: “Explain the Christian and Islamic views on abortion and how these views influence public policy.”

Model Answer:

Both Christianity and Islam consider life to be sacred, yet their interpretations differ. In Christianity, the New Testament’s emphasis on compassion allows some denominations to support abortion in cases of rape or risk to the mother’s health. Conversely, many Christian denominations, particularly the Catholic Church, oppose abortion on the grounds that life begins at conception. Islam permits abortion within the first 120 days of gestation if the mother’s health is threatened or if the fetus has severe abnormalities. These doctrinal differences shape policy: in the UK, the Abortion Act 1967 reflects a more liberal stance influenced by Christian liberalism, while in many Muslim majority countries, stricter laws align with Islamic teachings. Thus, religious doctrines directly inform legislation and public debate.

Question 2: “Compare the Buddhist and Hindu approaches to environmental stewardship.”

Model Answer:

Both Buddhism and Hinduism promote a philosophy of non violence (ahimsa) that extends to the environment. Hinduism’s concept of “prakriti” (nature) as a manifestation of the divine encourages sustainable living, with rituals such as tree planting and water conservation. Buddhism’s “interdependence” doctrine teaches that all beings are connected, leading to practices like mindful consumption and protection of wildlife. While Hinduism often integrates environmental practices into daily worship, Buddhism emphasizes personal responsibility through meditation and ethical precepts. In practice, both traditions inspire community initiatives, but Buddhism’s global spread has facilitated international environmental campaigns, whereas Hinduism’s environmental focus remains largely

localized in India and Nepal.

Additional Resources for Revision

To deepen your understanding, consult the following resources:

- AQA’s official website – Syllabus, past papers, examiner reports.
- Religious Studies textbooks – e.g., “Religion and Life Issues” by Author Name.
- Documentaries and podcasts – e.g., “Faith Matters” series.
- Academic journals – Journal of Religious Ethics, Religion & Society.
- Online forums – Reddit’s r/GCSEReligiousStudies, Schoology discussion boards.

Conclusion

Mastering the AQA B GCSE Religious Studies Revision Unit 2 – Religion and Life Issues requires a balanced blend of doctrinal knowledge, comparative analysis, and exam ready writing skills. By building a solid foundation of facts, practicing past exam questions, and employing structured revision notes, you’ll be equipped to tackle the exam confidently. Remember to keep your notes concise, use clear headings, and always tie your arguments back to the syllabus. Good luck with your revision, and may your studies be both enlightening and successful.

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