

# GCSE Ethics and Society Christianity – Marriage and the Family

## Marriage

- Marriage is an important way in which society supports couples and families.
- Christians believe in the sanctity of marriage- it is a holy gift from God.
- Many non-religious people also choose to marry, but do not believe marriage holds any religious significance.
- Many people in society choose to cohabit either before, or instead of, marrying.

## Sexual relationships-

- Many Christians believe that sex should take place only within marriage.
- Christians beliefs about homosexuality vary and many Christians are opposed to same-sex relationships and marriages.
- Humanists value freely chosen sexual relationships as long as the do not cause harm to others.

## Families-

- There are five family types within twenty-first-century society
- Many Christians believe that an important purpose of marriage is to have children.
- Charities like The Children's Society work in partnership with the Church to support vulnerable children and their families.

## Support for the family in the local parish-

- Churches work to support families in raising their children in a Christian environment.
- Family worship encourages families to include their children in church activities.
- Rites of passage enable children to become part of the Church as they grow up.
- Many churches offer family support outside of worship on a Sunday.

## Divorce-

- Divorce is the legal termination of a marriage. Divorce is readily available in the twenty-first century but the rate is now slowing down.
- Catholics may have their marriages annulled but may not divorce
- Protestants may allow divorcees to remarry in church.
- Humanists believe divorce can reduce unhappiness.

## Contraception-

- Catholic Christians reject the use of artificial contraception but accept natural methods, whereas some more conversant Christians reject all forms of contraception as being against God's plan for humans to have children.
- More liberal Christians will accept the use of artificial contraception, but some may reject certain types, for instance the morning-after pill.
- Humanists believe that contraception should be considered in relation to whether or not it harms anyone.

## Equality of men and women in the family-

- Christian views on the equality of men and women are based on teachings in Genesis and in the New Testament.
- Paul teaches that the husband is the head of the wife, that the wives should submit to their husbands and that husbands should love their wives.
- Many Christians interpret this to mean men and women are equal but with different roles to play. Other Christians disagree.

## Gender Prejudice and discrimination-

- Gender prejudice and discrimination is illegal in the UK, but is still experiences by many.
- Jesus treated men and women with equal respect and included women in his ministry
- Women were first ordained in the Church of England in 1994 and the first female bishop was ordained in 2014. The Catholic Church does not ordain women.

## Sources of Wisdom

1. "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." Genesis 2:24
2. "You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14
3. "Honour your mother and father." Exodus 20:12
4. "Go forth and multiply." Genesis 1:28
5. "'til death do us part." Wedding Vows
6. "So God created mankind in his own image; male and female he created them."
7. Genesis 1:27
8. "For you are all one Christ Jesus." Galatians

## Key Terminology

1. **Abstinence** Choosing to restrain oneself from doing something, for example, having sex or eating food (also called fasting)
2. **Adultery** When a married person has a sexual relationship with someone other than their spouse.
3. **Annulment** Declaration that a marriage is null and void, in effect, as if it had never happened, for reasons such a being under age or being forced to marry.
4. **Cohabitation** Living together in a sexual relationship but without legalising the union through marriage
5. **Conception** The moment when a sperm fertilises an egg, creating an embryo that can develop into a baby
6. **Divorce** The legal ending of a marriage
7. **Faithfulness** Not having a sexual relationship with anyone other than a partner
8. **Gender discrimination** Acting upon a prejudice about someone's gender, for example, not appointing a woman to a high pressured job on the assumption that she must be too fragile for the role, or expecting a man to do a heavy physical task on the assumption that he must be strong.
9. **Gender prejudice** Making a judgement about men or women on the basis of their gender, for example, judging all women to be emotionally fragile or all men to be emotionally strong.
10. **Heterosexuality** Sexual attraction to members of the opposite sex
11. **Homosexuality** Sexual attraction to members of the same sex
12. **Marriage** The legal union of a man and a woman or a same-sex couple
13. **Persecution** The ill treatment of an individual or group usually on the grounds of religion, politics or ethnicity
14. **Pride** A social movement encouraging homosexual people to express their sexuality more openly and with self-esteem.
15. **Procreation** To have sex and produce children
16. **Promiscuity** Sexual relations with multiple partners on a casual basis
17. **Sanctity of marriage** The idea that marriage has special significance as a holy gift from God