

NAME: _____

RE TEACHER _____

AQA RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION, RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES

HUMAN BEINGS AS SEXUAL, MALE AND FEMALE

1. The Bible tells us that male and female were created in the image and likeness of God and are of equal worth **“So God created humankind in his own image, male and female he created them.”** (Genesis 1:27)
2. The Catholic Church has a great respect for the role of sex within relationships. Male and female are designed to complement each other.

3. The Church teaches three key principles regarding sexual relationships:

- 1) That sex should only happen within marriage. Marriage is a sacrament.
- 2) That sex should be unitive **“The two shall become one flesh”** (Mark 10:8)
- 3) That sex should be procreative **“Be fruitful and multiply”** (Genesis 1:28)

THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

1. These were a series of talks given by St Pope John Paul II over a number of years about the human body and sexual relationships. The Pope summarised Catholic teaching in this area. Some of the key points made were:
2. People express their dignity through the body; the body is a visible expression of the spiritual.
3. Men and women are created equally and made for relationships
4. Marital sex binds two people into a communion of persons and gives the possibility of new life.
5. Marital sex shows mutual love, commitment and respect.
6. Sex outside of marriage is a form of exploitation for personal pleasure. It leads to people being thought of as sex objects rather than people with dignity and value.
7. Sex outside of marriage is a sin and breaks the marriage vows. No commitment is shown to the spouse.
8. True mutual love includes responsible parenthood. Artificial contraception should not be used, but the female body naturally has periods of infertility. Couples can use these periods of infertility to reduce chances of pregnancy.
9. Unfaithfulness starts in the mind **“everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”** (Matthew 5:28). People should remain in control of their thoughts.

(An overview of each lecture on the theme of Theology of the Body, given by St Pope John Paul II from 1979 to 1984, can be found on the link below)

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/general-audiences-john-paul-iis-theology-of-the-body-8565>



HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

1. The Church believes that sex should be open to the possibility of creating new life. Therefore, homosexual sex is wrong as it does not lead to procreation **“Be fruitful and multiply”** (Genesis 1:28). The Church does not support same-sex relationships or marriage because of this.
2. Homosexual people are called to lead celibate lives.
3. Being homosexual itself is not a sin and every person should be treated with love and compassion without discrimination. Some Catholic communities have Mass for the LGBT community, which is a sign of the Church's love for all her people; it could also be argued that this also reflects a 'softening' of the Church's attitude towards LGBT persons.
4. Pope Francis when asked about homosexuality by the media said: **“If someone is gay and seeks the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?”** (Pope Francis).
5. Liberal Christians support same-sex relationships and marriage (*Same-sex marriage was legalised in England and Wales in 2014.*) They argue that Jesus never said anything about homosexuality and that God is creative, including making more than one type of sexuality. God doesn't care what gender a person loves.



VALID MARRIAGE

1. For any marriage to be acknowledged as valid by the Catholic Church (officially accepted), it must meet certain conditions. This happens by a series of questions during the marriage ceremony, before the couple give their consent to each other. Some of these conditions include:
2. The couple must not be closely related to each other e.g. first cousins
3. The couple must be open to the gift of children (same-sex marriages do not allow this and therefore are not recognised as valid)
4. The promises must be made in the presence of a Catholic Priest or Deacon (*NB. The couple marry themselves, the minister is there as a witness for the Church*)
5. There must be free will in getting married. No person should have felt pressured into doing this as it can lead to the marriage being declared as null and void.
6. The marriage must be consummated (the couple give themselves freely to each other physically through sex)

THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE PROMISES



1. Marriage is seen as: an exclusive union of two people where children can grow and flourish. It is a sacrament and a sign of the love of Christ for his Church.
2. During the marriage ceremony, the couple make vows which only end when one partner dies. The vows acknowledge that there will be difficulties as well as good times. Both persons say these vows, acknowledging that there is an equal commitment in marriage. They do this publicly, asking the community for their acceptance and support.

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I (full name) take you (full name) to be my lawful wedded husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part." (**Marriage vows/promises**)

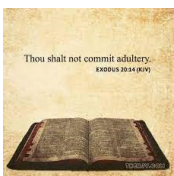
SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE

1. The Church teaches that sex is an exclusive act, shared only with the person you have pledged to spend the rest of your life with. It joins the husband and wife together in a lasting bond. Sex therefore should only happen when a couple are married to each other and not before.
2. Having sex before marriage trivialises it. When virginity has been preserved, the husband and wife can offer that gift to each other in marriage, making each other feel special, privileged and loved.

COHABITATION

1. The Catholic Church teaches that cohabitation is wrong. It breaks the sanctity of marriage and trivialises it.
2. Cohabitation removes commitment from the sexual union.
3. It can destroy the sense of family, with potentially disastrous results for any children.
4. If both persons are virgins when they marry, they cannot pass on any STI's to each other.
5. Many people do cohabit for financial reasons or to see if their relationship will work.

ADULTERY



1. The Catholic Church teaches that adultery is a mortal sin and is forbidden. It breaks the marriage vows and can destroy trust between a couple leading to the breakup of a marriage. It also breaks the commandment "**Thou shalt not commit adultery**" (Exodus 20:14)
2. If the married couple have children, they too will be affected by the tension caused in the home of the breakup of a marriage.

ANNULMENT



1. This is a statement by the Catholic Church that there was no valid marriage in the first place. It is **NOT** a 'Catholic divorce.' This is because something was wrong with the 'commitment' the couple made.
2. Reasons for an annulment could include: One of the couple having affairs, showing this person was not taking the exclusive nature of marriage seriously. It could include that the couple never had sex with one another or used contraception, showing that they never accepted the promise that they would accept children lovingly from God.

The couple were forced to get married (e.g. from a parent), which means the couple did not get married freely and willingly.

3. A person who receives an annulment, is free to enter a sacramental marriage in the future if they wish too.

(See below link to the Catholic Diocese of East Anglia for a step-by-step guide to the annulment process)

<https://www.rcdea.org.uk/marriage-tribunal/guide-to-marriage-nullity/>

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

1. Divorce is the **legal** ending of marriage. The Church accepts that sometimes this may be necessary for e.g. legal and financial reasons. However, the Church does not accept that the person can remarry after they divorce, as they are still sacramentally married to their partner.
2. If there was a valid sacramental marriage, the Church teaches that this only ends when one of the partners dies, divorce does not alter anything. The couple are still married **sacramentally**, even if legally they are no longer married.

3. This is based upon a number of reasons. At the marriage ceremony, the couple made promises '**till death us do part**', which cannot be broken. The Bible also states that when a couple get married, it cannot be ended "**What God has joined together, man must not separate. . . . whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery.**" (Matthew 19)

4. Divorced and remarried Catholics are not allowed to receive Holy Communion. Some people within the Church feel this is unfair and hurtful. Pope Francis has suggested the possibility of allowing divorced and remarried Catholics receiving Holy Communion in his Apostolic Exhortation **Amoris Laetitia**, but official Church teaching has not changed. **(See link below for the full document. In particular look at footnote 351)**



https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

FAMILY PLANNING AND CONTRACEPTION

1. The Church teaches that every sexual act should be open to the possibility of creating new life and be unitive "**The teaching of the Church is founded upon the inseparable connection . . . between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning.**" (Familiaris Consortio 20)

2. Artificial contraception (man-made e.g. condom) removes the possibility of both and is therefore condemned by the Church. Artificial contraception can also lead to an increase in promiscuity and give rise to the idea that people are 'sex objects.'

3. One of the Church's key documents which forbids the use of artificial birth control is the Encyclical '**Humanae Vitae**' and was written by St Pope Paul VI in 1968. In it, contraception was described by the Pope as "**an intrinsic evil.**" (Humanae Vitae) **(See link below for access to the full document)**

https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html

4. The Morning after pill is an abortifacient and potentially violates the sanctity of life.



5. The Church **does** support the use of natural family planning and responsible parenthood. This means that couples should only have children that they can fully support. When speaking to the media about responsible parenthood, Pope Francis said that "**Catholics shouldn't breed like rabbits.**" (Pope Francis) He also reaffirmed the Church's ban on artificial contraception at the same time.

6. Some people argue that contraception is essential to help stop the spread of STI's. The Church doesn't accept this argument and states that if people wait to have sex until they are married, there is no risk of STI's being passed on as both partners are still virgins.
7. Other people argue that contraception helps stop unwanted pregnancies and helps to control world population growth.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE FAMILY

1. The Catholic Church values the family as a Church in miniature. The Church teaches that the family has 4 main tasks:

FOUR MAIN TASKS OF THE FAMILY

- 1) Form a community
- 2) Support the life and personal development of each individual
- 3) Share in the development of wider society
- 4) Share in the life and mission of the Church

2. The family is the place of procreation and the best environment in which to bring up children. The children are a sign of the parents love for each other **"The fundamental task of the family is to serve life"** (Familiaris Consortio 28) **(See link below for the Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio)**
https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html

3. The family provides security in a way which children can't be harmed, sometimes through 'tough love'. Older siblings and parents help younger members of the family in how to take part in the life of a community.
4. The family provides love, education, support and moral guidance. Parents are the first teachers of the faith. Children should be independent, well-balanced individuals with great self-respect.
5. There are different types of family:

NUCLEAR FAMILY

Married man and woman with children. Most common in Catholic families



EXTENDED FAMILY

Additional relatives to nuclear family e.g. grandparents, aunts/uncles. Common in some cultures and Catholic families



OTHER FAMILY

Single parent or same-sex couple. Not as common in Catholic families



6. Some people argue that standards, morals and values that are learned in a traditional nuclear family can exist in non-traditional families (e.g. single parent.) Furthermore, that emotional attachment to people is more important than blood ties.
7. The Church teaches that the nuclear family is the ideal, at least initially, recognising that circumstances may change (e.g. separation, death of a partner.) However, the Church understands that every family will have different strengths and weaknesses.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE FAMILY

1. The Church believes that people play different roles within the family. St Paul in Ephesians 5:21 – 6:4 gives a clear expression of this:



- **“Wives be subject to your husbands”** – Wives should show love to their husbands by doing as he asks. Paul is not being sexist here. He writes for a different time and audience to our own and crucially says the following:
- **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her”** – The husband would never ask anything of his wife that was unjust or unfair because he loves her so much, even to giving up his life for her.
- **“Children obey your parents”** – Children should honour their parents as the commandment states.
- **“Fathers do not provoke your children to anger”** – Fathers should love their children and show kindness.

2. The Church stresses the importance of the mother’s role in bringing up children and the father to provide for its needs and to protect the family.

3. The Church recognises and fully support the rights and aspirations of women to work and perform roles in wider society. However, they should not feel pressured to work outside the home **“Wives and mother are not in practice compelled to work outside the home.”** (Familiaris Consortio 23)

(See link below for the Apostolic Exhortation Familiaris Consortio)

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html

GENDER EQUALITY

1. The Catholic Church believes in the equality of men and women; both are made in the image and likeness of God **“So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”** (Genesis 1:27)

2. Throughout the Bible, we can see the equality of men and women.

3. The importance of women in the Bible can be seen in the following ways: Deborah acted as a judge in the Old Testament, Jesus first appeared to women after the resurrection and Mary Magdala was given the task of announcing the resurrection to the male apostles. Mary is seen as the perfect disciple. St Paul tells us that Phoebe was a deacon.

4. The importance of men in the Bible can be seen in the following ways: Most of the books of the Bible are written by men and are about men. (NB. *The Bible was written in a time when men were perceived as superior to women*). The 12 apostles were all male as were the early missionaries (St Paul being the best example.)

5. Although the Church values the equality of both men and women, this does not mean uniformity.

Men and women are not just physically different but also different in their responses and actions. Man and woman complement each other **“Equal dignity and equal rights, nevertheless, do not mean uniformity.”** (Youcat 401)

6. The Catholic Church teaches that men and women have different roles in life and that these differences should be respected. This includes priesthood which is reserved for men only. (Jesus chose only male disciples)

7. Other people in society argue that men and women can fulfil any role, including priesthood.

(See link below to Pope John Paul II Apostolic letter ‘Ordinatio Sacerdotalis’ about reserving priesthood to men only)

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19940522_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html



(See link below to Pope John Paul II Apostolic letter ‘Mulieris Dignitatem’ about the dignity and vocation of women)

https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html

GENDER PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION



1. The Church is against any form of gender discrimination or prejudice. It can do great damage to an individual and prevent people developing their God given talents.
2. Gender discrimination can cause hurt and make people feel that they have no worth.
3. The Church champions the rights for women in the home, as mothers or in the workplace.
4. The Church teaches that men and women should receive the same pay for the same job.

Pope Francis when speaking about the inequality of pay because of gender said: “**They**

(women) have the same rights. The disparity is a pure scandal.” (Pope Francis)

5. The Church champions also the rights of men and that these rights need to be protected too.
6. The Church does not agree that men and women should be treated identically, unless the situation being dealt with requires this. Certain roles, most notably priesthood, belong to one gender.

Key words

Adultery	When you are already married and having a sexual relationship with someone who isn't your husband or wife
Annulment	A statement by the Catholic Church that there was no valid marriage in the first place
Artificial contraception	Man made methods (e.g. condom) used to prevent a pregnancy taking place
Cohabitation	A couple living together and having a sexual relationship without being married
Consent	Give permission for something to happen. In marriage, when a couple commit themselves to each other for life
Divorce	Legal ending of a marriage
Family Planning	Practice of controlling how many children a couple has
Gender discrimination	Taking actions that treat one person differently to another because of their gender
Gender prejudice	Expecting someone to behave in a certain way because of their gender. This is often negative
Nuptial	To do with marriage
Procreation	Having children
Remarriage	When a person who has been remarried before goes on to marry somebody else. (<i>This is only allowed in the Catholic Church if that person's partner has already died</i>)