

# Candidate Style Answers

## **GCSE Religious Studies A**

OCR GCSE in Religious Studies: J620

Unit: B571 (Christianity)

These candidate style answers are designed to accompany the OCR GCSE Religious Studies A specification for teaching from September 2009.

# GCSE Religious Studies A

## B571 Christianity 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by senior OCR examiners, with the support of the Qualification Manager, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “medium” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

<b>1e) ‘It is impossible to forgive some people.’ Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. (12)</b>	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner’s commentary</i>
<p><i>Christianity is a demanding faith and it is based on the principle that you must take Jesus as your life model. Jesus taught that we should forgive those who sin against us. When Peter asked him whether he should forgive his brother seven times Jesus replied “seventy times seven times” meaning that forgiveness was to be extended indefinitely. Jesus himself prayed on the cross that his Father should forgive those who sinned against him, so he set the example that he wanted us to follow.</i></p> <p><i>Yet this is a hard teaching. It demands that Christians rise above their natural human tendencies, which are to hate</i></p>	<p><b>High Level Response</b></p> <p>This is a good response. The answer begins with the Christian viewpoint, satisfying the question requirement to refer to Christianity in your answer, and develops it well, making reference to relevant biblical passages and drawing out their significance.</p> <p>In paragraph 2 the candidate shows awareness that there are difficulties in applying the teaching, and he/she correctly identifies that there are enormous psychological barriers to its implementation. The example of the parent of a raped and murdered child is a good one for this purpose.</p> <p>The candidate then draws out his/her argument by making a thoughtful point about</p>

*those who hate you. It can be easy to forgive minor misdemeanours and even some serious ones, but some acts are so heinous that they challenge our capacity to forgive. For example, if some raped and murdered your child, would you be able to forgive them? Does Christianity expect the impossible? Is it not natural that parents defend their children? Without this parenting instinct the human race would not exist. If this instinct is necessary, then not forgiving your child's killers is also necessary.*

*Yet Christianity believes that the grace of God enables us to rise above our human limitations. We can forgive even the most horrendous crimes. Concentration camp victims have forgiven their guards. This is an example of how far forgiveness can go. They were motivated to do so by their Christian faith.*

*Yet many would argue that forgiveness is impossible. Surely we do not forgive some people, those condemned to life in prison for the worst offences. You cannot say that a person in prison for murder has been forgiven. The perpetrators of genocide have committed crimes beyond their capacity to pay, so if they have to pay for their crimes to be forgiven, then they cannot be forgiven.*

the necessity of parental instinct and then draws out an argument that forgiveness may be undesirable in some cases. This is a credible and well-explained alternative point of view.

There have therefore been two points of view already given.

The candidate then discusses the issue in paragraph 3, taking the Christian view first, making reference to the important Christian teaching that grace takes humans beyond what nature can do. He then supports the viewpoint by making reference to a creditable example of the most arduous forgiveness.

The argument retains its balance by referring to the fact that we do not forgive some people, for example, those sentenced to whole life sentences. He/she then makes the point that if the sinner to be forgiven must pay for their crimes, some crimes cannot be paid for and so the sinner must remain without forgiveness. This is a valid point that balances out the Christian one.

A reasonable development of the argument then ensues as the candidate draws the strands of argument together and comes to a reasonable viewpoint that some people may need a lifetime of punishment to be forgiven and applies it to the Nazis, a very suitable example.

The answer finishes with a personal viewpoint, which is required for high level responses and the candidate comes to a reasonable conclusion.

Written communication is good.

<b>1e) 'It is impossible to forgive some people.' Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. (12)</b>	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner's commentary</i>
<p><i>Some people commit sins so bad that we cannot forgive them. Just think, imagine that someone murdered your children and husband or wife. Are you supposed to forgive them? This takes forgiveness too far. It is completely impossible for anyone to forgive someone like that. You would naturally not want to kill them and you could not stop hating them. Whenever you saw them you would think of what they had done.</i></p> <p><i>I know that Jesus said that we should forgive our enemies, but while you can forgive sins against yourself you cannot forgive sins against others. It would be for the murder victims to forgive their murderer, and how do you know that they want to do so.</i></p> <p><i>Some people do not deserve to be forgiven. Think of horrors performed by the Nazis. They were responsible for thousands of murders each. How can their victims forgive them? Even if their victims could, is it possible for their relatives to do so.</i></p> <p><i>It is not a good idea to forgive some people. Their crimes are too horrid that they must pay for life. If we think that anyone can be forgiven people will try to get away with too much.</i></p> <p><i>In my view I believe that while forgiving everyone is an ideal, it is impossible for most people to do in the most extreme cases, and we should not condemn them for being unable to forgive the atrocities committed against them and their families.</i></p>	<p><b>Medium Level Response</b></p> <p>Note that there are some mistakes of spelling, grammar and punctuation in this response.</p> <p>The answer begins with a clear statement of a position. The point is effectively made, but it does not address any point of principle. It simply works from a psychological basis that forgiveness is impossible. There is no ethical or religious reasoning.</p> <p>The candidate then makes reference to an alternative viewpoint, in this case the Christian one, which meets the criterion that you must make reference to Christianity. He makes a valid point that you can only forgive sins against yourself, but the Christian viewpoint is not well developed.</p> <p>Some ethical reasoning is exhibited in this paragraph. The view that some people commit crimes too horrid for forgiveness is reasonable, and it is supported by an example, but it would benefit from a better explanation.</p> <p>The candidate makes another argument against forgiveness on practical penal grounds, arguing that it is dangerous for society to forgive some people. This is a credible argument.</p> <p>The personal viewpoint is made here. The candidate shows some insight by saying that forgiveness is an ideal which is beyond most people and that we should not demand that they forgive beyond their capacity to do so.</p> <p>This is a medium level response because although it makes a reasonable argument it is not as well developed as it might have been. The response lacks religious / Christian content apart from paragraph 2.</p>