

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.

2e) “Preparing for Easter is the most important thing a Christian can do.” Discuss this statement. You must make reference to different points of view and a personal viewpoint and make reference to Christianity. (12)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner’s commentary</i>
<p><i>In my personal point of view it is not possible to say that any specific act is the most important thing a Christian can do. Many Christians argue that celebrating Eucharist is the most important Christian act, but at times you might forego Eucharist to perform an act of charity. We are told that the Good Samaritan performed an act of charity that did not involve any ritual actions whatsoever. Christians are told to love God and others, but we cannot identify this with any specific act, and love can be done anywhere at any time.</i></p> <p><i>Others would disagree. Many would point out that the preparation for Easter</i></p>	<p>High Level Response</p> <p>This is a good response. The candidate begins with his/her personal viewpoint. He/she discusses certain possible claimants to the most important thing that a Christian can do, such as the Eucharist but points out that there are times when Christian priorities change and backs this up with a biblical reference. The candidate then makes a very significant point that while love is the most significant it cannot be focused at a particular place and time or in any specific act.</p> <p>However, the candidate then moves to different viewpoints. He/she points out, quite rightly, that what goes on in the Easter festivities is vitally important in the Christian</p>

is a very important spiritual discipline. You spend forty days fasting and attempting to become a better person. You confess your sins and reflect on the meaning of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. This is the central drama of Christianity. Without this drama there would be no Christianity and so unless Christians take part in this drama they cannot be genuine Christians. You cannot take part without preparation, so preparing for Easter is the most important thing that a Christian can do. However, I do not think that this is a correct view, as we can confess our sins and try to improve ourselves all times of the year and throughout our lives. We do not need to prepare for Easter to do these things. In fact, we should not reserve them for Easter preparations, so the argument does not work.

Others would argue that the most important thing that a Christian can do is celebrate Christmas, because Christmas is a time for family and light in the darkness. Genuinely preparing for Christmas involves renewing broken relationships with your family and helping the poor. Christianity is all about relationships with others, so mending them is what Jesus came for. However, while we focus on relationships at Christmas, we must be doing this all the time, not just during a festival, so the argument does not work.

Others might argue that loving others is what Christianity is all about, and that love is the most important thing. After all, Jesus said that the greatest commandment is love. This is true, but love is not a specific thing, you can love at any time and place and in a number of ways, so it cannot be the most important thing for a Christian.

In my view, while love is the most important element in Christianity we cannot link it to a particular festival or the preparation for it.

faith and that the Easter drama is central to what Christianity is about. He/she furthermore makes the valid point that what happens in the preparation for Easter involves vital spiritual discipline. These points are credible and make the case strongly. However, the candidate then discusses the claims made in the paragraph by pointing out, quite correctly, that what is done in Lent can and should be done at other times of year and concludes that this argument does not work.

The candidate then takes on an alternative viewpoint that preparation for Christmas is the most important thing a Christian can do and presents a fair and effective justification for the claim. He/she then discusses the view and then analyses and dismisses it.

The candidate then tackles another viewpoint that love is the most important thing that a Christian can do, and then points out that it cannot be linked with any specific festival, time or place. He/she points out that love is not a linked to a specific thing.

The answer finishes with a summary of what the candidate has been saying and ensures that it focuses on the question that has been asked and addresses it. Note that the candidate has focused consistently on the question that has been asked and has answered it with relevant information.

Written communication is good.

2e) “Preparing for Easter is the most important thing a Christian can do.” Discuss this statement. You must make reference to different points of view and a personal viewpoint and make reference to Christianity. (12)

Candidate style answer	Examiner’s commentary
<p><i>Easter is the most important festival in Christianity, far more important than Christmas because it celebrates God’s victory over sin and death. When Jesus rose again it was God’s way of showing that he cannot be defeated. So you must take Easter seriously, so celebrating Easter is more important than celebrating any other festival. After going through the hard times of lent we remember the death of Jesus and climax in the joy of Easter. This makes it a special festival.</i></p> <p><i>At Easter we do not just take part in church services we renew our faith. During the ceremony we renew our baptismal vows, promising to avoid evil and have faith in the Trinity. This is a vital part of the Christian faith, and without baptism and faith we cannot live the Christian life. So celebrating Easter is the most important thing a Christian can do.</i></p> <p><i>Preparing for Easter is so important as it helps us to prepare for the most important festival. We spend our time reflecting on our sins and trying to become better people. This is vitally important.</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, some people might suggest that love is the most important thing that Christians can do. Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan in which the Samaritan does not go and celebrate any religious service, which the priest and Levite do, he simply helps the injured man and is the only praised for it. However, the commandment is to love God first, and that is what we do at Easter. Works of charity are more important than religious services.</i></p> <p><i>In my personal opinion I believe that</i></p>	<p>Medium Level Response</p> <p>This is a medium level response towards the upper end of the band. The candidate begins with a reference to Christianity which meets the examiner’s criteria. He/she then proceeds to explain a point of view which involves the meaning and the theology of Easter. He/she then draws out the implication that Easter is very important.</p> <p>The argument then proceeds to show that celebrating Easter is the most important Christian act by referring to the Easter liturgy and its implications. But the argument is not convincing and feels a bit laboured here.</p> <p>The candidate finally focuses on the issue of whether Easter is the most important festival and comes to an intermediate conclusion.</p> <p>The candidate then tackles an alternative viewpoint and supports it with biblical reference and discussion. This makes a valid point supported by an example that loving others is the most important thing that a Christian can do.</p> <p>The personal viewpoint asserts one of the points and explains it to a degree. He/she shows that celebrating Easter is the most important Christian act and supports this view by reference to its ability to generate faith and the love that flows from it.</p> <p>In general there are good points made, but the answer is not fully focused on the issue in the stimulus.</p> <p>Written communication is good.</p>

celebrating Easter is more important than any other Christian act because it enables you to show your love of God and your appreciation of Christ. When you celebrate Easter you affirm your faith and this helps you to love others and do acts of charity. Preparing for the most important festival must be the most important thing for Christians to do.