

Marriage

Catholics believe: marriage was created by God to build and preserve **society**; it is a **sacrament**; it is the right setting for **sexual relationships** and starting a **family**.

The purpose of marriage is: to live in a **life-long** and **faithful** relationship where a couple can support each other; to enjoy a **sexual relationship** as God intended; **to have children** (procreation) and bring them up as members of the Church

Catholics believe marriage: can only be between one man and one woman (**monogamy**); **joins a couple together for life**; is not for everyone - some choose a **celibate** life.

Many non-religious people believe that couples can choose to live together (**cohabit**) or get married but should be faithful to their partner. A legal marriage can provide stability and legal protection for children. Many people to choose to have a sexual relationship and cohabit before they get married. Today marriage can be between same-sex couples.

The Catholic Church teaches that couples should wait until they are married before having sex or living together. Research suggests many Catholics today would allow pre-marital sex and accept cohabitation.



Sexual relationships

The Catholic Church believes that sex in marriage is unitive (a source of joy and pleasure, bringing the couple closer together) and procreative (open to the possibility of having children).



The Catholic Church teaches that sex-outside marriage is wrong because: the **Bible** says it is sinful; the **Catechism** says it is wrong; adultery breaks the **wedding vows**; adultery is prohibited in the **10 Commandments** and condemned by **Jesus**.

The Catholic Church says that **being homosexual is not a sin** but homosexual sex is a sin. The Church does not accept same-sex marriage or civil partnerships. This is because: the **Bible** condemns homosexual activity; sex should be open to the possibility of **new life**; the **Catechism** teaches marriage is for a man and a woman.

The Church teaches that it is **sinful to harass or attack homosexuals** because: people cannot help their sexual orientation; the Bible teaches that all people should be respected because we are all made in God's image and likeness.

Most non-religious people **accept consensual sexual relationships** and see **no problem with same-sex relationships** if it does not affect other people's human rights.

Families

The Catholic Church teaches that parents have a duty to: provide for their **children's needs**; teach them **moral values**; bring them up in the **Catholic faith**.

Family life is important because: it is one of the purposes of marriage; the family was **created by God** as the basic unit of society; it is where children learn right from wrong; it is **where faith is introduced and nurtured**.

The main family types today are: **nuclear** families; **single-parent** families; **same-sex** families; **extended** families; **blended** families.

The Catholic Church: gives its blessing to nuclear and extended families as living within the law of the Church; recognises that single-parent families need support and are not sinful; disapproves of same-sex and blended families as they involve same-sex marriage and re-marriage following divorce; believes parents should be married and the Church should make it easier for cohabiting couples to marry.

Most **non-religious people** believe that the family is an important part of society for bringing up children in a stable setting, providing for their needs, keeping them safe, passing on moral values and teaching them to be responsible citizens.



Support for the family in the local parish

The Catholic parish supports family life by: providing Catholic education (**schools**) where faith, worship and moral teaching is part of daily life; **being family-friendly**, welcoming children and helping children share in worship through Children's liturgies; help parents prepare their children to receive the sacraments by **running First Communion and Confirmation classes**; the priest **teaching about the importance of family life and marriage**, offering **marriage guidance and support** when it is needed; providing contact with charities and groups who can support family life e.g. Catholic Marriage Care; run events which **bring families together** to help them feel part of the parish family and to offer support to one another.

Parishes help families because: they have a duty to **support baptised children**; to **support parents** in bringing their children up in the Catholic faith; by doing so they are helping **build a better society for all**; in this way it **helps the Church to grow** from generation to generation.

Parish support is important to families because: bringing up children in the Catholic faith involves taking them to Church regularly; teaching them about the faith requires knowledge and expertise parents may not have; taking part in the sacraments is essential; praying and supporting one another gives families strength.



GCSE Religious Studies Unit 3 Philosophy and Ethics 3.2 Relationships and Families in the 21st Century (Key sources of wisdom & authority are included on the back of the sheet)

Contraception

The **Catholic Church** teaches that: sex should be **unitive** and **procreative**; Catholics may use **natural family planning (NFP)** as a way to regulate the size of their family.

Catholics believe this because: the encyclical '**Humanae Vitae**' (Pope Paul VI) **condemned artificial contraception** and declaring NFP acceptable; NFP does not separate the unitive and procreative purpose of sex; artificial methods do, which is not God's intention; some contraceptives cause an early abortion; artificial contraception can lead to promiscuity.

NFP uses the natural pattern of a woman's fertility cycle to help a couple decide when to have sex.

Other Christians accept artificial contraception within marriage because: it can improve **women's health**; it allows **couples to grow closer through sex**; the **Bible** does not forbid it; **Church leaders** have declared it acceptable.



Non-religious people accept artificial contraception because: it **reduces abortions**, it reduces the spread of **STIs/HIV**; it improves the **health** of women and children.

Divorce and remarriage

The **Catholic Church** does not allow divorce because: **Jesus** taught it was wrong and that marriage is for life; the couple have made a **covenant** with God through their marriage which cannot be broken; the **Catechism** teaches that marriage cannot be dissolved.



The **Catholic Church** can grant an **annulment** which recognises that a couple were never truly married. These couples are then free to marry. This could be granted if: the marriage was **never consummated**; it was **never a truly Christian marriage**; a partner **hid important information** e.g. they already had children.

Catholics can get a civil divorce but cannot get remarried.

Most **non-Catholic Churches** allow divorce because: Jesus allowed it for **adultery**; people should be allowed **forgiveness** and **given a fresh start**; it is **better to divorce than live in hatred**. These Churches **allow remarriage**.

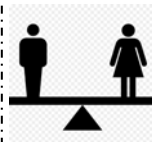
Atheists and Humanists allow divorce and believe: people should be **treated justly**; **partners/children should be cared for**; partners should be **allowed to remarry**; they believe people should **act in the best interests of all people involved**.

Equality of men and women in the family

The **Catholic Church** teaches that: **men and women have equal status in God's eyes**; men and women have **different qualities** e.g. women have the ability to bring new life into the world and have a caring capacity giving them a crucial role in family life; women should have equal roles in work and politics; women must discern the balance of work, community and family.

Many **Evangelical Protestants** believe that **women: have a duty to look after children and the home**; should **not speak in Church**; should **submit to their husband's authority**. These beliefs are based on: St Paul's teaching that 'women should not speak in Church'; the creation of Eve after Adam as his 'helpmate' (Genesis 2.); Jesus choosing only men to be Apostles.

Liberal Protestants believe: **men and women are equal**; they should have **equal roles**. These beliefs are based on: St Paul's teaching that 'in Christ there is neither male or female'; the creation of both Adam and Eve in God's 'image and likeness' (Genesis 1); Jesus treated women as equals.



Atheists believe in equality. Humanists believe in equal rights for men and women (many suffragettes and feminists were humanists).

Gender prejudice and discrimination

The **Catholic Church** opposes gender prejudice and discrimination because: **God made men and women in his image and likeness**; St Paul taught we are **all equal in Christ**; the **Catechism** teaches we should have equal rights in life and society.



Following pressure from women, **Vatican II** allowed: women to teach in theological colleges, to be extraordinary ministers of communion; to read at Mass; to take some funerals

Evangelical Protestants teach that: **men and women have separate roles**; women should **not speak in Church**; must **submit to their husbands** because this is the **Bible's teaching**.

Liberal Protestants oppose gender discrimination and allow **women to be ministers, priests and bishops**.

Most **atheists and Humanists** believe **gender discrimination is wrong** and that Churches that refuse to ordain women or have women leaders should be made illegal.

The **Catholic Church** is accused of discrimination for not ordaining women. The Church teaches: the **priest represents Jesus** who was a man; **men and women are equal but have their own unique gender**; **Jesus chose 12 men to be his apostles**.

		SOURCES OF WISDOM AND AUTHORITY	
	Topic	Quote/Reference	Source
1	Marriage	Sex should happen within marriage.	Catechism
2	Sexual Relationships	Sex should be both unitive and procreative.	Catechism
3	Families	Catholics should not live in same-sex parent families, blended families or families headed by cohabiting parents.	Pope John Paul II
4	Support for families in the parish	Jesus said, 'let the children come to me.'	Mark's Gospel
5	Contraception	Only natural method's of contraception are acceptable.	Humanae Vitae (Pope Paul VI)
6	Divorce and remarriage	A marriage between baptised persons can never be dissolved.	Catechism
7	Equality of men and women	God made mankind his own image and likeness, male and female he created them.	Genesis 1
8	Gender prejudice and discrimination	Inequalities between men and women are sinful; Christians should promote equality.	Catechism