

Religion and social responsibility

Making moral decisions

Using the Bible – the Bible carries authority as it was written by God.

- Many Christians believe the Bible is the word of God and contains teachings on how to live
- The Bible has authority from God about what Christians should believe and how they should live
- Some Christians believe that only the Bible should be used to decide what is right, wrong and what they should believe.
- Christians have different opinions on the authority of the Bible.

Authority of the Church – Christians also look to the Church for help and advice when making moral decisions. The Church gives guidance by:

- Talking to other Christians
- Praying and worshipping together
- Listening to the priest or vicar
- Accepting the authority of the Church to explain and teach God's word.

Using their conscience – some Christians believe that their conscience is given to them by God. What is the conscience?

- The inner feeling or sense of what is right or wrong
- Christians believe it is the voice of God within us
- It is the way both religious and non-religious people can judge their moral actions
- It makes us feel guilty if we do things that are wrong
- Some Christians believe that conscience is the most important guide when making moral decisions.
- **Conscientious objectors** – are an example of people using their conscience. These people refuse to fight in a war because they think it is against God's moral code.

Christians and situation ethics

Situation ethics are when you think about the actual situation to make a decision rather than looking to any other sources. Some Christians would use the GOLDEN RULE – treat others as you would want to be treated. Jesus also said that it is important to always do the most loving thing.

- There are reasons for using situation ethics these include – the fact that every situation should be judged individually, love is an easy principle to apply
- There are reasons against using situation ethics – it is impossible to predict what will happen in every situation ethics, in theory anything could be the most loving thing to do.

Human rights

These are the basic rights and freedoms that all human beings are entitled

Why human rights are important to Christians –

- They believe every human being is created by God in his image and deserves respect
- They believe God loves everyone equally so all should be treated equally

- The teachings of the Bible, for example the Ten Commandments support most human rights laws.

The Bible and human rights

- The Parable of the Sheep and Goats teaches that it is the moral duty of Christians to help people in need
- Jesus taught the Golden rule showing all humans are worthy of value and respect and human rights are important

The importance of democratic and electoral processes

Democracy is the political system used in the UK. It is important to take part in democratic and electronic processes because these give all citizens a say in who runs the country.

Democracy in the UK

- UK is a representative democracy governed by an elected parliament
- Every 5 years an election is held where people vote for the political party to form the next government
- The government makes decisions on how schools will be run, healthcare, defence and how much tax should be paid
- Everyone over 18 years who is a British citizen has a vote
- There are three main political parties that each put forward its own views: Labour, conservative, Liberal Democrat

Why is it important to take part?

- Voting allows citizens to have a say about who runs the country
- People elected through voting are responsible for making important decisions that affect everyone.
- Change can only be brought about through the democratic process

Christian teachings on moral duties and responsibilities

- The golden rule – Treat others as you would want to be treated
- Parable of the sheep and goats – Jesus taught that God at the end would separate the people who have helped others and those who have not
- Am I my brother's keeper? St Paul taught that Christians should not sit by and do nothing while others suffer.

Christian attitudes to genetic engineering – genetic engineering is a controversial topic for Christians. All Christians believe life is sacred and therefore should be respected. Even those who support genetic engineering believe it should only be done for reasons such as healing the sick.

- For – God gave humans dominion over the world, The Golden Rule, Jesus healed people, God has given us the gift of knowledge and we should use it.
- Against – Only God can create life, life is sacred, Some Christians like Catholics believe that life begins at conception and therefore embryos should not be used, Could be abused and harm the rights for disabled people.