



GCSE Religious Studies

Religion & Life

Workbook



Name:

Animal Rights

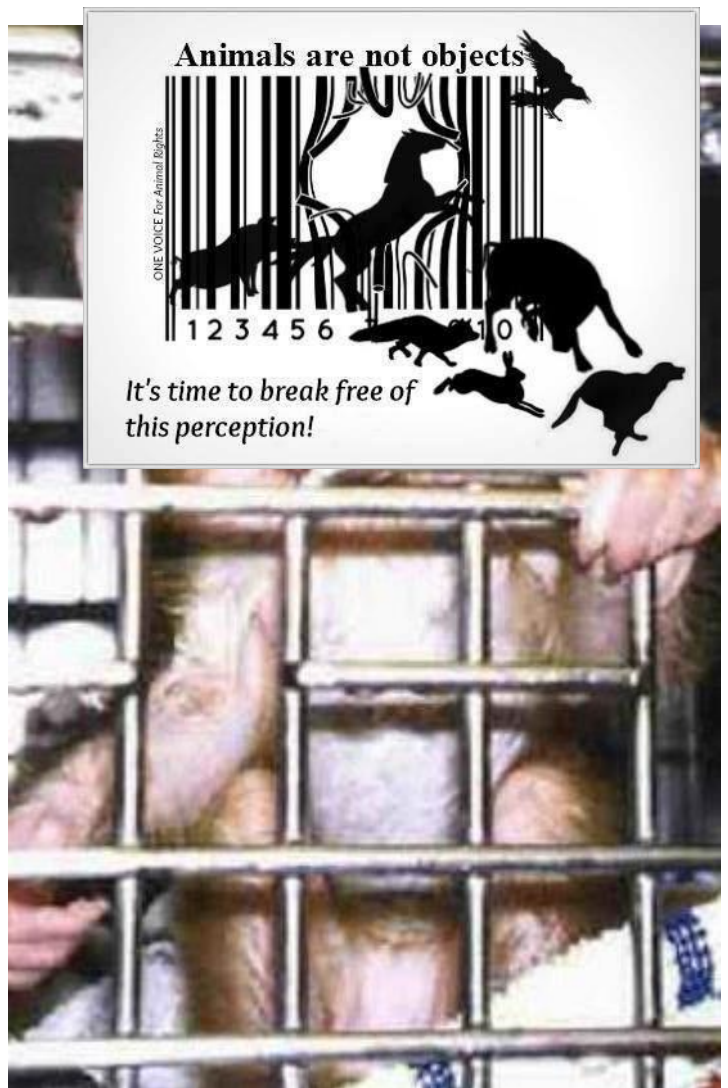


Religious people believe that animals are part of God's creation. All life, including that of animals, is sacred. Most religious believers think that they were given dominion over animals, so can make use of them for food, clothing and as working animals. However, animals should always be treated with respect, fairness and kindness.

Many of the ways we use animals can be justified. The problem comes with how some people treat animals, even in a use we find acceptable. So, for example, farming is fine, but battery farming may be thought of as cruel, given that the animals get very little space and a completely unnatural life. A religious person might choose never to buy produce which has come from a battery farm, choosing always free range.

Animal Experimentation

People often immediately think that animal experimentation is cruel, however some animal experiments should be for the good of human beings, which is why many people, including religious believers, support them. Animal experiments further our medical knowledge so that surgical procedures are improved. They are used to test new drugs for effectiveness and so that they do not cause harm. They are also used to test new products, for example, cosmetics for harmfulness (toxicity). Medical science has always used animals. Many surgical procedures, such as transplantation surgery, were perfected on animals. Some experiments just mean a change in diet; others cause injury or death. At the end of the experimentation any live animals left are humanely destroyed. Since 1896, in the UK, there have been specific laws to control animal experimentation.



What are some of the issues?

1. It is cruel. Even scientists accept the animals suffer, though they believe it is for the greater good.
2. Modern science has now developed some other alternatives, like using human tissue cultures to test for toxicity
3. Animal genetics and human genetics are different, and often reactions are not the same. So some animal experimentation is pointless and tells us nothing helpful

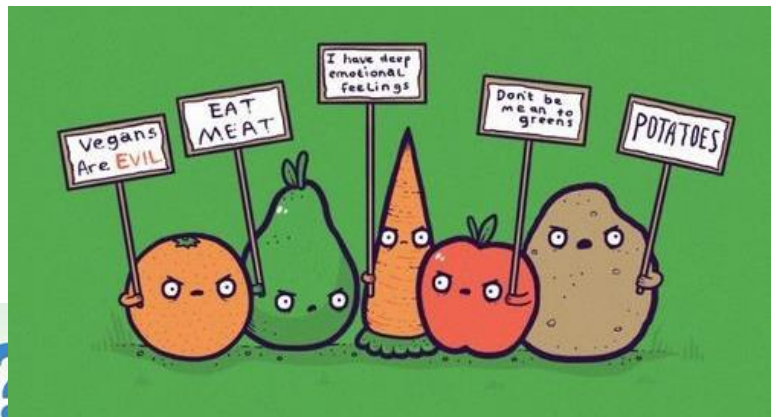
Animals for Food

Why be vegetarian?

There are many reasons why people are vegetarian. They are usually to do with health, upbringing, religion and concerns about farming methods. Some people eat no meat or dairy products at all (vegans); some choose to eat no meat or meat products (vegetarians).



The Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths all allow meat in their diets. Some Christians fast at certain times of year, for example, not eating certain foods during Lent. Many Christians do not eat



Why
LOVE one but **EAT** the other?



red meat on Fridays out of respect for Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday. Muslims and Jews may not eat certain meats, for example, the meat of a pig, or shellfish, and birds of prey. They may

only eat ritually slaughtered meat (halal for Muslims, kosher for Jews). This reflects the idea that God/Allah/G-d gave man dominion over animals, and so they could be used by man, including as food. Hindus and Buddhists, on the whole are vegetarian, reflecting two important beliefs: ahimsa (non-violence) and respect for all life. However, for Buddhists, it very much depends on culture in the country and on available diet. For example, in Tibet

a healthy diet is only possible if it includes meat. Many Sikhs are vegetarian to show respect for God's creation and the Sikh langar is always a vegetarian meal.

Tasks:

1. What does the belief in having dominion over animals mean for religious believers?

.....
.....

2. What are the positives of animal experimentation?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What are the negatives of animal experimentation?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Why might someone choose to be a vegetarian?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Explain religious reasons **for** eating meat.

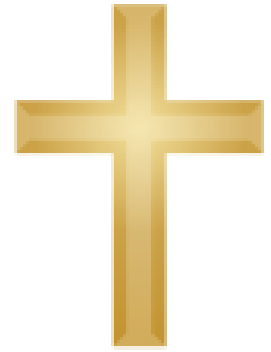
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. Why are many Sikhs vegetarian?

.....
.....

Christian Teachings about the World and the Environment

Christians believe God created the world and gave humankind stewardship – the responsibility to look after the world. Christians, in modern times especially, have seen the need to work to heal the world and look after the environment.



The Bible teaches:

- God made the world and gave the duty of stewardship to humans (Genesis 1:28)
- The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it (Psalms 23:1)
- Respect for life extends to the rest of creation (Pope John Paul II)
- More than ever – individually and collectively – people are responsible for the future of the planet (Pope John Paul II)
- I want to awake in you a deep admiration for creation, until anywhere thinking of plants and flowers, are overcome by thoughts of the Creator (St. Basil)

Clearly, humans have a special role on earth, which is to look after the earth and animals. Since humans must face God on the Day of Judgement, all must carry out their given duties. If humans did not look after the world, or did nothing to stop its destruction, they should expect to be punished by God. Many Christians are motivated to do environmental work because of this belief.

Tasks:

1. What does Christianity teach about the world and the environment?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
2. What does the Bible teach?
.....
.....
.....
.....
3. What will happen to Christians who do not look after the world?
.....
.....



The Value of Human Life

Religions say that human life is the most important and special of all kinds of life. There are two key concepts: quality of life and sanctity of life.

Sanctity of Life

This is the idea that all life is special.

Many religions believe that life is sacred because God created it (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism). Some religions believe life is special because it is the way we can achieve enlightenment (Buddhism and Hinduism). No one in the world believes that life is worth nothing. All the legal systems put murder as the worst crime you could commit, with the toughest punishments. All religions believe that life is special and deserves to be protected and cherished. Religions extend this belief to plant and animal life.



The Status of Human Life

Religious believers think that humans are the highest form of creation, or that they are within the highest levels of spiritual development. This means that the value of human life is beyond measure, and as such it should be protected and cared for. Most religious believers are 'pro-life' in many questions of life and death.



Quality of Life

This is a description of how good someone's life is. It includes how comfortable they feel, how easy it is for them to live through each day, perhaps how much they have in terms of money and possessions. For this unit, it is about whether or not life is worth living because of the medical situation a person finds themselves in. Giving someone a good quality of life is part of the most basic teaching of all religions; we should treat others as we wish to be treated.

Tasks:

1. What do religions say about human life?

.....
.....

2. What is the sanctity of life?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What is the status of human life?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What is the quality of life?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Abortion

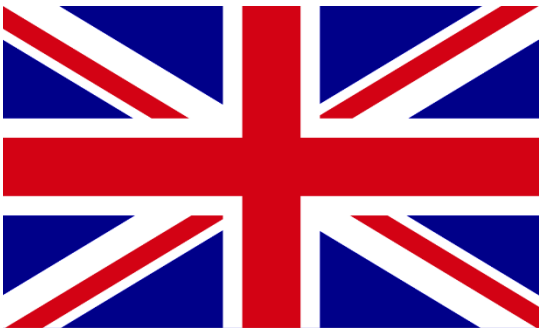
The question of when life begins is key because many people see abortion as murder or killing and there has to be a life before there can be a murder. It does affect whether or not we see abortion as wrong.



By law, the life begins when the baby is born, but given the Abortion Act (1967) will not allow abortions beyond 24 weeks; is that when life begins? Many people think that when the foetus looks like a baby, it should be treated as such, whether it is fully formed or not.

What we can say is that at every stage the foetus is a potential life.

The Law on Abortion in the UK



The law defines abortion as: “The deliberate expulsion of a foetus from the womb, with the intention of destroying it.” It is different from a miscarriage, which has the same result (the pregnancy ends without a living baby), because miscarriage is accidental, a turn of nature.

The law in the UK (except in Northern Ireland) begins by stating that abortion is illegal. It then goes on to say that there are some exceptions. Abortion can only be carried out if two registered doctors agree that at least one of the following is true:

- There is a danger to the woman’s mental and/or physical health
- The foetus will be born with physical and/or mental disabilities
- The mental and/or physical health of existing children will be put at risk

The abortion has to be carried out at a registered place, by a registered doctor, before the 24th week of pregnancy.

A registered doctor is a doctor who has passed medical exams and is recognised by the Medical Council. So a doctor who has been struck off the official list can neither give advice, nor carry out an abortion. A registered place is a hospital or a clinic that has

registration with the government, and can perform such medical procedures as abortion because of that registration. Any other place is not legal. Breaking the law carries great penalties for all those involved.

Reasons For and Against Abortion

Pro-Life

Pro-life is the term we use for those arguments against abortion, usually in any circumstances. Pro-life pressure groups include PROLIFE and SPUC. Since they support the foetus' right to life, their arguments are all in favour of protecting the foetus to ensure it is born. Pro-life arguments include:



- All life is sacred and must be protected
- The foetus cannot defend itself – someone has to
- God created life, and as stewards of this world, humans have to protect life
- Abortion is the murder of another human being. Murder is wrong
- When a foetus will be born with disabilities, we cannot say what the quality of its life would be, so should not decide to forbid it that life
- The foetus has a right to life and not to be discarded as if it is just waste

Pro-Choice



Pro-choice is usually associated with supporting the use of abortion, but it actually means the arguments which defend a woman's right to choose what happens to her body. Since they support the woman's right to choose, the arguments are about the woman, rather than the foetus. Pro-choice arguments include:

- A woman should have the right to decide what happens to her body
- If having a child is going to put a woman's life at risk, or is going to make her postpone medical treatment which she needs, then she should have the right to an abortion

- Where a woman is pregnant as a result of rape or incest, it would be wrong not to allow her an abortion
- Up to a certain point, the foetus cannot survive outside the womb, so it should not be thought of as a life in its own right
- Some foetuses are so damaged that it would be cruel to allow them to be born
- If we banned abortions, women would still have them – but not in a safe way. We need to protect women

Tasks:

1. What question does abortion debate?
.....
.....
2. How many weeks is abortion legal until?
.....
.....
3. What does law in the UK say about abortion?
.....
.....
.....
.....
4. When might an abortion be allowed?
.....
.....
.....
.....
5. Explain reasons **for** abortions (pro-choice).
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
6. Explain reasons **against** abortions (pro-life).
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thinking About the Lives Involved

When we consider abortion, we are immediately thinking about the foetus involved. However, the law considers the women first not the foetus. Her life and well-being take precedence in law. For example, if a woman has a cancerous uterus, the only option is to remove her womb. This will result in the death of the foetus, but without treatment, the cancer will kill the woman.



How would religions view the argument that a woman's life is at risk unless she has the abortion?

- All religions believe in the sanctity of life and that life should be preserved/protected. Without the woman's life, the foetus has no chance of life
- Buddhists believe the key intention must be compassion, so helping save a woman's life is compassionate
- In Judaism and Islam, the life of the mother takes precedence – she is a fully developed human with responsibilities, whereas the foetus is not even born and will need everything doing for it
- The Roman Catholic Church sees abortion as wrong, but where it is the 'side effect' of a procedure to save a woman's life, it can be accepted
- The Church of England has said that abortion is a great moral evil, but that where the continuance of a pregnancy threatens a woman's life, then it is justifiable
- In Judaism, before the birth, the foetus has no right to life over the mother

Or, she could decide against an abortion and continue the pregnancy. She would be choosing to work through or in spite of the problems, which made her consider abortion. If there had been a risk to her mental or physical health, this is even more difficult.

Tasks:

1. Who does the law consider first?

.....
.....

2. How would religions respond if the woman's life was in danger?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Who might the woman discuss the issue of abortion with?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What other options are available?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Euthanasia



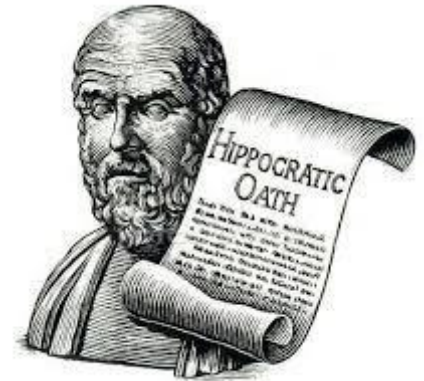
Euthanasia is mercy-killing. It is helping someone to die, who is suffering from a terminal illness or whose quality of life is less than they can bear, usually because of a degenerative disease. Euthanasia is done because of compassion or loving kindness.

The debates surrounding euthanasia have a long history. Hippocrates, a doctor from ancient Greece, openly stated he would not prescribe drugs to help someone end their

life. His stance has become the basis for the Hippocratic Oath, sworn by doctors in the UK, which says, "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel..." In 1516CE Thomas More defended euthanasia as the last treatment option for doctors to give, if the patient wanted it.

In the 21st Century, in most Western countries, groups exist to try to make euthanasia legal. In some countries, e.g. the Netherlands, it is legal.

Voluntary euthanasia is when the person who is suffering asks for euthanasia to end their suffering. This could be active euthanasia, for example, being given lethal drugs to end their life so that their illness does not kill them. However, it could also be a choice to stop taking medication, so that their illness kills them. This is passive euthanasia.



Involuntary euthanasia is when the patient is unable to say what they want to happen, and their family has to decide. It is usually that the person is on life support and will not recover. This is usually acceptable to most people, because actually the person is being allowed to die rather than being killed.

The Law on Euthanasia

Euthanasia is illegal in the UK. It can be seen as assisted suicide, so breaking the Suicide Act of 1961, which forbids anyone from helping someone else to die and carries a 14-year jail sentence. It can also be viewed as manslaughter or, at worst, murder, which carries a life sentence.

Doctors do switch off life-support machines when patients have no sign of brain activity, and they do administer drugs to ease pain, which also shorten life. Neither of these is seen as euthanasia in the UK.

Tasks:

1. What is euthanasia?

.....
.....

2. What is the Hippocratic Oath?

.....
.....

3. What is the difference between voluntary euthanasia and involuntary euthanasia?

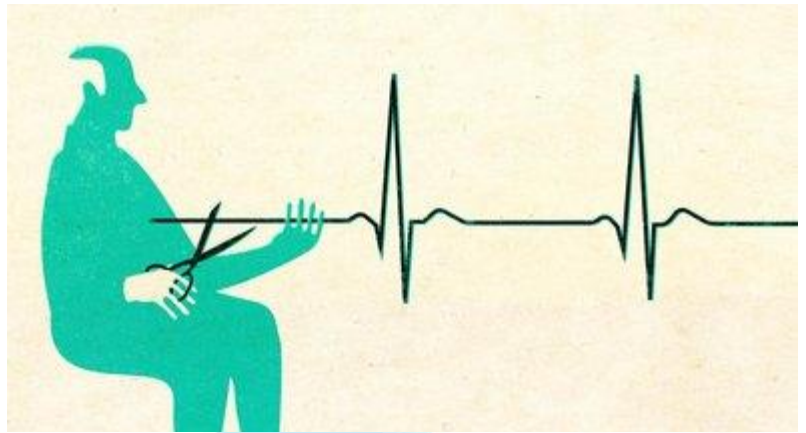
.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What does UK law state about euthanasia?

.....
.....
.....
.....

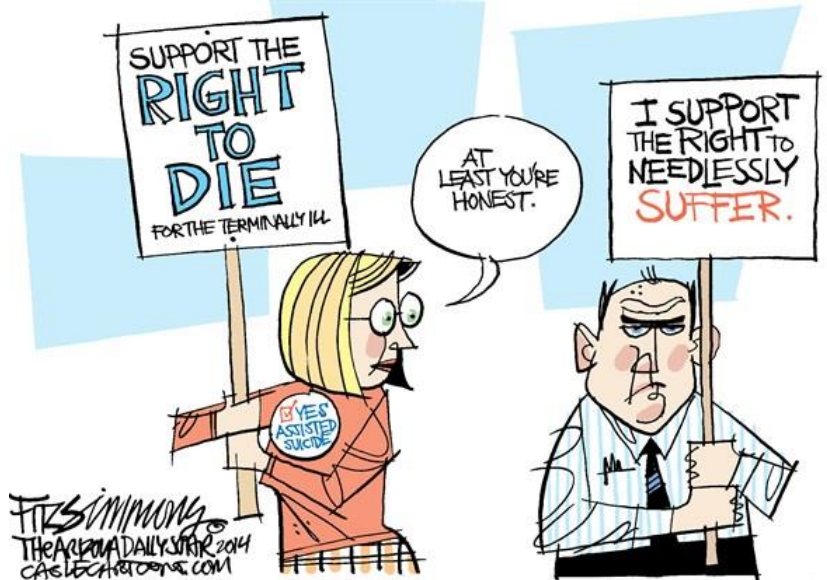
The Right to Die

In society, arguments about euthanasia focus around the right of a person to choose their own death. On the whole, religious believers do not believe humans have the right to make this decision.



Arguing for the right to die:

- It is my body, so should be my right to make decisions about it, after all I can elect for surgery, have tattoos, and make every other major decision
- When you consider all human rights, the right to die naturally follows on from them
- I am the only one who can really say when my life is no longer worth living
- We see it as compassionate to put animals in pain to sleep, so should allow the same compassion to humans



Arguing against the right to die:

- to allow euthanasia would be to encourage it, so that people would force it on others for their own advantage, for example, making an elderly relative feel a burden
- Life does not belong to us, it belongs to God – euthanasia is playing God
- We should care for people in their last days, showing love, not kill them
- Doctors and nurses take oaths to protect lives, not to end lives

Quality versus the Sanctity of Life

Many people say that euthanasia is all about the quality of life and that for those who want euthanasia, they are suffering too much, and they no longer have a good quality of life. Others say that, regardless of quality, life must be maintained because it is too special to end.

Tasks:

1. Why do people believe they have the right to choose their own death?

2. Why shouldn't people be able to choose their own deaths?

3. Explain the significance of the quality versus the sanctity of life.

Care for the Dying – The Hospice Movement



Hospices are the preferred Christian response to the issue of euthanasia. A hospice is a home for those who are terminally ill (dying). They are for both children and adults of all ages, for example, those with cancer. People

may go there until they die or to give their families respite from looking after them for a while. On average, people stay there for two weeks.

Originally, hospices were places for travellers, the sick and the needy to stay. They were set up by Christians. Over time, some of them began to specialise in looking after those who were dying.

When someone is dying, they cannot be cured – only cared for. Hospices try to provide care for all aspects of a person's illness and suffering. Many religious people believe that if the care is good enough, then euthanasia would not even be considered.

The aims of hospices:

1. To relieve the physical symptoms of illness. In other words, to get rid of as much pain as is possible. This includes whatever it takes, for example, massage, meditation and relaxation. Often, medical treatment for the dying is very specialised. It is called palliative care.
2. To care for the emotional and spiritual well-being of the patient. Many dying people have unfinished business, which is a worry to them. The hospices help them to sort things out. Many patients are angry, for example, asking questions like 'why me?' – Hospices help them to come to terms with dying. Many patients need to be listened to and often relatives cannot cope with this, but the hospices do
3. To support families of patients who also suffer. Hospices provide many support networks and education services for them, even after the death of the patient
4. To educate others caring for the dying and to work out new, better ways to care for the dying which will be invaluable in the future. The experience built up in hospices can be used in other places.

Religious groups see hospices as the way forward for terminally ill people. God wants us to care for these people, to look out for them, to express God's love for them, not to kill them.

At. Anne's Hospice

This hospice was opened in 1971 and serves the Greater Manchester community. Its aim is to improve the quality of life of people with life-threatening illnesses. It aims to do this whilst supporting families and carers. In a year, the hospice treats over 3000 patients, 40% of whom return home after their stay. This costs almost £9million, meaning that the hospice has to raise over £16,000 a day, which it does through voluntary contributions.



95% of patients are suffering from a cancer-related illness. Each patient is given a personal care plan, which is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is what makes the support so unique and effective.

Tasks:

1. What is the Hospice movement?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. How did the Hospice movement begin?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What are the aims of hospices?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Explain the work of St. Anne's Hospice, Manchester.

.....
.....
.....
.....

Christian Attitudes to Life

Christianity tells us:

- God created life in his own image (Genesis)
- Do not kill (Ten commandments)
- I, your God, give life, and I take it away (Old Testament)
- The Catholic Church teaches that life must be respected from conception until natural death
- Doctors do not have an overriding obligation to prolong life by all means possible (Church of England)



It is clear that on most occasions, Christians will not agree with either abortion or euthanasia. All life is sacred as it was created and belongs to God. Whilst death might mean going to heaven to be with God, it should not be hastened. Life should always be protected. For most Christians, abortion is always morally wrong. Some accept it rarely as a necessary evil.

in the case of abortion, where the mother's life is at risk it is difficult because her life is also sacred. Most Christians would accept procedures which save her life, even if they lead to the ending of the pregnancy. Many would also point to the fact that in many cases, there are options other than abortion, for example, adoption.

In the case of euthanasia, few support active euthanasia, regardless of what a person might themselves wish for. This is seen as killing, so is wrong. However, in countries where euthanasia is legal, there are Christian groups who also agree with it, for example, the Dutch Protestant Church in the Netherlands, who see it as an act of love and compassion and a good use of the medical knowledge God has granted us.

Tasks:

1. What does Christianity teach about life?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Would Christians support abortion? Why/why not?

.....
.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. Would Christians support euthanasia? Why/why not?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Religious Beliefs about Death and the Afterlife

Christianity

Christians believe in the physical resurrection of the body. At death, the body waits until Judgement Day. Catholics call this Purgatory. At judgement, each person faces God and Jesus to evaluate their deeds. If there were good in life, they go to heaven, which is paradise and wonderful forever. If they were bad, they go to hell for eternal punishment.



1. What does Christianity teach about death and the afterlife?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Exam-style questions

