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GCSE

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

8062/13: Paper 1 Christianity  
Report on the Examination

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**Question 01.1**

Just over 48% gave the correct response, which was 'Sin'.

**Question 01.2**

Most achieved 2 marks by saying that (1) Jesus was carried up into heaven; (2) this took place 40 days after Jesus' resurrection. Having said that, marks were gained for a variety of different points, for example that the ascension took place in Bethany / Jesus went up into a cloud / two men appeared in white clothes / the disciples were no longer sad / they were told about the gift of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Some tried to hedge their bets by putting down half a dozen or so different answers in the hope that two of them were correct. This is not good exam technique, since examiners will mark only the first two different responses to 2-mark questions.

**Question 01.3**

This was an 'influences' question, and not a question on the nature of the Trinity. Answers which responded with a list of teachings about the Trinity therefore rather missed the point. Most did well, with 53% of students gaining full marks. The most popular responses suggested (1) that as the Spirit, Christians feel God at work in their lives, so they can feel strengthened and supported; (2) God is the loving Father, so Christians may be influenced to love and help others. Another common response was that the Holy Spirit watches over the world, which influences Christians to care for others. Many said further that since Jesus died in pain and torment, those who suffer will be comforted by knowing that God sees and understands their pain. Some argued that the Trinity is a religious mystery, and this influences Christians to accept that there are some things about life that will always remain a mystery.

**Question 01.4**

This question produced some excellent answers based on a number of different themes. The key word in the question was 'causes', although some ignored it and talked about the *nature* of sin. The vast majority of students referred to the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis: the temptation of Eve by the serpent, and the 'original sin' of Adam and Eve leading to the 'fall' of humanity. Since 1 mark was available for 'relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Christian belief and teaching', most picked up that mark by referring to Genesis as the source of the story. The other two marks in this 5-mark question came mostly from the idea that God gave humanity free will, as a result of which some inevitably choose to sin.

There were several different answers, however. Some suggested that God himself is the cause of sin, since he created humanity being able to sin in the first place. Some said that the cause of sin is Satan / the Devil, because Satan opposes God and encourages sin in all its forms. This was sometimes linked to the Lord's Prayer, where 'lead us not into temptation' was associated with Satan as well as with other people. In the same vein, some students referred to Jesus' temptations by the Devil in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13), where Jesus was tempted to sin by giving way to bodily hunger and the promise of worldly power. Another useful approach was given by those who referred to the temptations of things like drink and drugs, which can cause people to sin.

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**Question 01.5**

The essay questions this year showed that students had been very well prepared in how to be properly evaluative. For Question 01.5, over 70% of students reached Levels 3 and 4, and much of the writing was perceptive and varied.

Most began with the ‘inconsistent triad’: that God is all-powerful and all-knowing, yet evil exists. To this was added the word used in the question, that God is supposed to be loving. Most then pointed out that it is hard to see why such a God allows people to suffer. The general consensus was that it is not suffering that is the problem so much as the *extent* of suffering. Many asked why a loving God could not control natural disasters. Some asked why God would bother to create humanity in the first place; and many referred at the same time to the massive extent of animal suffering. Balanced against such ideas, most argued that God gave humans the gift of free will, and such a gift means that some will use their free will to make others suffer. Other ideas included: Jesus suffered on the cross, so humans should accept their own suffering / suffering can make people stronger / love includes suffering, as with parents disciplining their children / suffering can be a test of faith, etc.

Responses at Levels 1 and 2 tended to be general arguments with little or no reference to religion beyond a hopeful ‘Love thy neighbour’. Level 3 responses had clear references to religion, but these tended sometimes to be inserted into the essay at random points, with no obvious link to the logic of the argument. Level 4 responses used biblical and/or other references as part of the argument. For example, some said that suffering was necessary in order to bring about the great virtue of forgiveness, referring to Luke 23:34, where Jesus on the cross says, ‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do.’

Most answers at Levels 3 and 4 reached a conclusion that arose from the thread of the argument. As a matter of interest, there was no expectation from examiners that a conclusion should be written at the end of an answer. Some began with their conclusion and then justified it, and this worked equally well.

**Question 02.1**

By contrast with Question 01.1, almost 97% correctly identified ‘praying alone’ as a form of private worship.

**Question 02.2**

In giving ‘two ways in which the Church helps Christians to respond to persecution’, students were at liberty to understand this in terms of responses to those doing the persecution or those being persecuted. Most gained two marks by referring to forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, using churches as places of refuge and offering support of various kinds. Some referred to larger-scale responses, e.g. the Aegis Trust committed to preventing genocides and other atrocities.

**Question 02.3**

Simpler questions often benefit from simple answers, which was very much the case with this question, where many students gained full marks by describing the work of (1) street pastors, and (2) those who maintain food banks. There were of course many further suggestions, including the work of the Salvation Army in providing hostels for the homeless, and that of the St Vincent de

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Paul Society in helping refugees, released prisoners, the disabled and the mentally ill. Nearly all students found this question accessible.

#### **Question 02.4**

The focus of this question was on the ‘importance’ of celebrating Holy Communion/Eucharist, and not simply on describing what happens during the celebration. Most of those who were awarded full marks quoted Jesus’ words when he identified the bread as his body and the wine as his blood (eg Mark 14:22-24), symbolising Jesus’ sacrifice/atonement for human sin. The other two marks were often gained by referring to the Catholic belief in transubstantiation – that the bread and wine were important in becoming the actual body and blood of Jesus. The mark for referring to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching could be given either for identifying Jesus’ words or for identifying transubstantiation as a Catholic belief.

There were several other relevant responses, for example that Holy Communion/Eucharist was important as being Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples / that it is important for being a sacrament / for uniting the worshipper with Christ (as ‘soul food’) / for bringing Christians together and uniting members of a church. Some used Paul’s account of the Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-34), where Jesus says, ‘Do this in remembrance of me’, as an important command to repeat Jesus’ actions.

Some appeared to be anticipating Question 02.5, by suggesting that Jesus taught the Lord’s Prayer at the Last Supper, whereas that prayer occurs elsewhere, in Matthew 6 and Luke 11.

#### **Question 02.5**

This was the only question on Christian practices which did not out-score its counterpart in the ‘beliefs’ section of the paper. For whatever reason, a large proportion of students appeared to have no knowledge of the Lord’s Prayer or its contents. The Specification is quite clear: ‘Prayer and its significance, including the Lord’s Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.’

Level 1 answers were generally confined to brief comments about the need to use informal prayers. For Level 2, most suggested that the Lord’s Prayer was a set prayer, and contrasted it with informal prayer. Level 3 answers were able to give and explain at least one of the specific phrases from the prayer, and knew that Jesus commanded his disciples to pray in this way, meaning that it was indeed the only prayer that Christians need to use. Level 3 answers also referred to the use of the Lord’s Prayer in liturgy, and contrasted this with situations where Christians might prefer to use informal / impromptu prayers to ask for forgiveness, healing, etc. Level 4 responses showed a more detailed knowledge of the prayer, and most suggested that the prayer is considered complete or perfect in itself, showing faith, praise, intercession and petition, for example. Most argued that Jesus’ command to use the prayer did not rule out the use of other set prayers or informal prayers, depending on the needs and state of mind of the one who prays.

Very few mentioned the fact that there are two ‘versions’ of the Lord’s Prayer. Most quotations were from Matthew’s version in the Sermon on the Mount, although some used Luke’s text. Full marks were available for the use of phrases from either version (or both).

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.