

Candidate Style Answers

GCSE Religious Studies A

OCR GCSE in Religious Studies: J620

Unit: B572 (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

J620 B572 Christianity 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

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 Qualifications 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.

3e) ‘Important stages in life should be marked with a religious ceremony.’ Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. (12)

<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiners commentary</i>
<p><i>Whether or not important stages of life should be marked with a religious ceremony depends up whether or not you believe in religion. A deeply anti-religious person would definitely say that they should not be, but others might take a more flexible view. There are many militant secularists who would like to see church weddings banned.</i></p> <p><i>Christians might argue that God is not just a distant lawgiver, but is a being who is very close to his people, and is part of their lives. Christians believe that life is about having a personal relationship with God. So, if you are having ceremonies to mark the big occasions of life, you invite people you</i></p>	<p>High Level Response</p> <p>This is a good answer reaching the highest level. In the first paragraph the candidate quickly gets to the heart of the issue, to show that the resolution of the question is dependent upon what view one takes of religion. This makes reference to one point of view, thus beginning to satisfy the examiner’s requirements.</p> <p>In the second paragraph a different point of view is given. This viewpoint is the Christian one. At this moment the candidate has satisfied the requirement of including different points of view and making reference to Christianity, though the answer has yet to be fully developed. Note that the candidate makes</p>

<p><i>love, so is it not right to bring god to the ceremony? For Christians, God is not just someone who is pegged on to a secular, non-religious ceremony. Their whole life is religious, it is God-focused, so the important ceremonies of their lives are religious. Marriages and deaths are always seen as having religious dimensions and so they need religious ceremonies.</i></p> <p><i>Christians might also point out that religious funerals give the relatives of the deceased person hope for a better life in the next world. This soothes them and increases their happiness, as they believe that their relatives are with God. This is a good reason for a religious ceremony. Christians might also claim that marriages held in a church with God as a witness are more likely to last than secular marriage. This is a good reason to have religious ceremonies.</i></p> <p><i>Of course, some people might say that there is no reason for a religious ceremony being needed. We have secular weddings at registry offices and secular funerals. Many people are not baptized, so why do we need to have religious ceremonies when others are apparently quite happy without them? There is some strength to this claim, as people can clearly be happy without religious ceremonies.</i></p> <p><i>Christians would respond that these people are basically non-religious and so cannot be expected to have religious ceremonies, but Christians would point out that they believe that to be religious is the right and best way to live and so the fact that non-believers do not have ceremonies does not mean that they are unnecessary, but that non-believers have not realized their value.</i></p> <p><i>In my view I believe that religious ceremonies are important for those people who want them. Nobody should be pressurized into having a religious ceremony if they do not want one, but</i></p>	<p>a strong theological point, giving a fundamental reason for having religious ceremonies at key life stages. The candidate is therefore showing and applying a high level of understanding. Specific reference to certain important ceremonies is made to illustrate the point. This is helpful.</p> <p>The candidate then develops the argument to show the practical reasons for having religious ceremonies; the emotional and social benefits that they may bring. This complements his/her theological explanation.</p> <p>In the fourth paragraph the candidate balances his/her answer with an alternative point of view, which rejects the need for religious ceremonies, and considers it fairly</p> <p>In paragraph 5 the candidates gives a Christian response to the claim in paragraph 4 which identifies a key reason for Christians disagreeing with this statement.</p> <p>The candidate concludes with a personal viewpoint. It is a measured response which takes on board both viewpoints for and against the necessity of religious ceremonies at key moments in life. The personal viewpoint is developed throughout the paragraph. It makes sense and has some force as an argument.</p> <p>Written communication is good.</p>
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on the other hand religious ceremonies make the important occasions of life more meaningful, as they give it significance in the eyes of God. Thus, as long as people sincerely take part in religious ceremonies, they are of great value at the important stages of life.

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<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiners commentary</i>
<p><i>Many people like to have a religious ceremony to mark important stages in life. Most people like to have a church wedding and we go to churches when we have a funeral. Many people have their child baptized. Lots of girls think that a church wedding is something special for their big day.</i></p> <p><i>But you do not have to have a religious ceremony for key moments in life. Many people do not have church weddings and civil ceremonies are not religious. There are non-religious funerals. Not all children are baptized and they don't seem to miss it. After all, there are many non-religious people who don't feel a need for religious ceremonies, so we cannot tell them that they need to have religious ceremonies for the key stages. This is a free society where people can adopt the beliefs that they want, so we cannot tell them that they have to have a religious ceremony.</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, religious people think that God should be part of the main stages of life. So Christians want to bring him into these stages. They believe that they want God's blessing on what they do. So parents want to bring their child into the world with God's blessing. When a girl gets married she wants not just the white dress but God's blessing. Having God's blessing makes the occasion special and helps you on your way. At funerals people want to think that their loved one is now with God and a religious service helps them to do this. They may feel that praying for the deceased person will help them in some way.</i></p> <p><i>How can you be a Christian if you want to leave God out of the ceremonies marking the main stages of life? Surely you want God to guide you.</i></p>	<p>Medium Level Response</p> <p>The response meets the requirement of displaying alternative points of view and a personal viewpoint. It also makes reference to Christianity, but the references are not well developed and are quite simplistic.</p> <p>The first paragraph makes its case on the basis of what people like. This does not address any genuinely religious points, although it is a point of view. The argument at this point lacks depth.</p> <p>The candidate continues by arguing primarily from a social point of view. He/she simply describes the view that prevails in society that no one should be told that they need to have a religious ceremony. The point about this being a free society is correct, but it does not address the key issue, as the statement does not challenge the right of non-religious people to live by their principles, but tries to argue that religious ceremonies are desirable.</p> <p>The religious point of view is accurately given in paragraph 3 and it is here that reference to Christianity is made. The religious points are correct, but they lack depth of thought. The thinking is somewhat descriptive of people's feelings and does not make a strong argument from religious principles.</p> <p>In paragraph 4, the candidate makes a valid theological point, but it is under-developed.</p> <p>The personal viewpoint is validly stated and balanced. There is a balance between the socio-political viewpoint that people ought not to be forced to perform religious ceremonies and a recognition that ceremonies have value for those who believe in religion and want them. The candidate concludes with a clear summary of his/her point of view.</p>

In my view religious ceremonies are only relevant if you are religious. If you want to be religious, fine, have a ceremony, but there is no obligation to have one. Christians should not try to force others to have religious ceremonies if they do not want them or are not religious. I suppose that ceremonies help some people, but they are not necessary for everyone, so no, I do not believe that important stages should be marked with a religious ceremony.