



GCSE **Religious Studies**

8061/2

Report on the examination

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General Comments

Most centres have once again prepared students well for this exam. Most students demonstrated a solid understanding of Christian beliefs about the **resurrection, creation, incarnation**, and the idea that **Christians do not need to worry about life after death**. Where students performed best, they showed a **coherent and wide-ranging knowledge** of Christian theology, used **specialist vocabulary** confidently, and supported their answers with **relevant teachings** from named sources of authority such as the Bible or the words of Jesus.

However, some students struggled when they did not recognise or understand key terms from the specification. For example, terms like *resurrection*, *incarnation*, and *atonement* were sometimes misunderstood or replaced with vague generalisations. This limited the depth of their responses, even when their general knowledge was sound.

There was a good range of theological understanding shown, and many students made appropriate use of teachings such as “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) or “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14). It was encouraging to see students linking these teachings to broader themes such as salvation and eternal life.

Some centres are still teaching students to begin teachings with phrases like “Christian scriptures teach...” While this shows awareness of religious authority, it does not meet the criteria for the **Source of Authority** mark. To gain this mark, students must name the source directly—e.g., “The Bible says...” or “Jesus taught...”—and link it clearly to the point being made.

In summary, while most students attempted all questions and showed a fair level of understanding, those who were confident with **key terms, named sources**, and **clear evaluation** were able to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question - Based Comments

1.1

This question tested key knowledge. Most students had no issues with this question. They easily identified the key word.

1.2

This question assessed students’ understanding of a core Christian belief. Overall, most students were able to correctly identify two beliefs about the resurrection, demonstrating secure knowledge of this key concept. However, a minority of students confused the resurrection with the crucifixion and provided responses that were not fully relevant to the question. This highlights the importance of careful reading and precise understanding of key theological terms. Where students remained focused on the resurrection, responses were generally accurate and clearly expressed.

1.3

Most students responded well to this question and demonstrated a sound understanding of Christian beliefs about creation. The majority were able to explain how the belief that God created the world influences Christian attitudes and behaviour today, in line with the expectations of the mark scheme. Some particularly thoughtful responses included:

- **The idea of rest and Sabbath:** Several students made the connection between the seven-day creation story and the Christian practice of resting on Sundays. These answers showed good understanding of how the creation narrative influences Christian observance of the Sabbath and the value placed on rest and worship.
- **Moral behaviour and accountability:** Some students suggested that because God is all-powerful and created the world, Christians believe they should behave well to honour Him and avoid punishment in the afterlife. While this was a more interpretive point, it was often well explained and supported with reference to Christian teachings about judgement and salvation.

Most students were able to access the marks available by referring to stewardship, the sanctity of life, and the responsibility to care for the environment—key ideas outlined in the specification. These responses were often supported with relevant teachings such as “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31), and showed a clear link between belief and practice. Where students struggled, it was often due to a lack of specific terminology. Some responses remained general and missed opportunities to use key terms such as *omnipotent*, *stewardship*, or *sanctity of life*, which would have strengthened their answers.

1.4

This question tested students’ understanding of the Christian belief in the incarnation. Many students who correctly understood the term were able to provide two clear and accurate beliefs, often referring to Jesus being both fully God and fully human, or to the belief that God came to Earth in human form through Jesus.

Where students performed well, they explained these beliefs clearly and often supported them with relevant examples or implications for Christian faith and practice.

However, a common issue was not being able to secure the fifth mark for the **source of authority**. In many cases, students either:

- Did not include a source at all, or
- Referred to a teaching without naming its source (e.g., saying “Christian scriptures say...” rather than “The Bible says...” or “John 1:14 states...”).

This prevented otherwise strong answers from reaching the top of the mark band.

A small number of students confused the term *incarnation* with *reincarnation* or answered on the *resurrection* instead. These responses, while sometimes showing general religious knowledge, did not address the question and therefore could not be credited fully.

1.5

This 12-mark evaluation question was generally well answered, with many students demonstrating a strong grasp of Christian beliefs about the afterlife. A significant number of students were able to access the higher levels of the mark scheme by presenting **balanced arguments** and engaging with the debate thoughtfully.

Stronger responses often compared the role of **faith versus works** in salvation, showing an understanding of differing Christian perspectives (e.g., Protestant emphasis on faith alone vs. Catholic views on the importance of good deeds). While few students included direct scriptural quotations, many still achieved Level 4 by clearly referencing key beliefs and applying them effectively to the question.

Some students did include **atheist or non-Christian perspectives**, which, while showing broader thinking, were not creditable in this context as the question specifically asked about Christian beliefs. These responses sometimes lacked focus and drifted from the core of the question.

Overall, this question was answered well, and responses reflected a **clear and confident understanding of key theological concepts**. The performance suggests that when students are taught the **core beliefs and terminology** from the specification, they are well equipped to succeed in extended evaluative questions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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