

Contraception

Artificial – man made e.g. condom

Natural – a type of practice or behaviour aimed at preventing pregnancy e.g. NFP (natural family planning)

Christianity teaches that sex should be open to the possibility of **procreation**. Therefore, by using contraception, you are preventing procreation from happening. **The Roman Catholic Church** teaches that the use of contraception is a sin. **The Church of England** teaches that sex should open to procreation, however, it accepts that sex is also an **expression of love** and promotes **responsible parenthood**. Therefore, the use of contraception is encouraged if you cannot properly look after an raise a child. You should wait until you're ready.

Islam teaches that children are a blessing from God, if a couple wishes to have them. Muhammad taught that parents should only have as many children as they can properly look after – **responsible parenthood**. So Muslims can and should use contraception.

Families

- **Nuclear** – mum & dad + children
- **Extended** – Nuclear family + other relatives
- **Single-parent** – mum or dad + children
- **Polygamy** – illegal in the UK. Man + more than 1 wife

Many people would argue that the best place for raising children is within a family environment/ Religious families also provide a basis for a religious upbringing, enabling parents to educate their child in a faith.

Theme A: Relationships & families

Sexual relationships

Roman Catholics believe that sex should have 2 purposes: to **UNITE** a couple in married love and to **CREATE** new life. **Pre-marital** sex is a sin, as is masturbation (as it cannot lead to procreation). Some other Christians accept sex before marriage in a committed and loving relationship, as it is an **expression of love**. The Bible says "Do not commit **adultery**", so having sex with someone other than your marriage partner is committing a **sin**.

Islam teaches that it is a religious duty to marry & have children. Every person should be a virgin before marriage, and observe **chastity** before and during marriage.



Gender equality



Traditionally, men have held positions of authority in most religions. However, there is a debate about what the role of women should be. In the **RC Church** women cannot become priests. Many argue this because: Jesus had male disciples; Jesus chose a man to lead his Church after his ascension (Peter); A woman cannot completely represent Christ during the Eucharist. In the **C of E** women can become both vicars and bishops.

Some of the earliest converts to Christianity were women, for example Priscilla at Ephesus.

"There is neither Jew nor gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and females, for you are all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28)

"So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27)

Homosexual relationships

For some Christians, **homosexual** sex is thought to be unnatural and cannot lead to pregnancy, so it is a sin and it is wrong. In places, the Bible also says it is wrong for a man to sleep with another man, which has also been used to show that homosexuality is wrong.

The **Qur'an** sets out specific punishments for those who have homosexual relationships. It calls these people fornicators, and **punishment** is severe e.g. flogging or execution.

"Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith"

Marriage & divorce

Marriage is a sacrament in some Christian traditions; it brings a blessing from god. In marriage, a couple promise to each other through **vows**/promises, to be good to each other, to be faithful, to love and cherish each other, until the marriage is ended by death. The rings represent the eternal bond the couple are entering into, in front of God.

For **RC** Christians, divorce is always wrong. Marriage is a sacrament which cannot be broken. The vows state **"until death do us part"** and these promises are binding.

It is possible to have an **annulment**, which is where the marriage is set aside, as if it were never real.

For most other Christians, divorce is discouraged but acceptable as a last resort. It is sometimes the **lesser of two evils**, and also a **necessary** evil.

Christianity teaches:

- God hates divorce (OT)
- "Whoever divorces... then marries another; it as if he committed adultery" (Jesus)
- We should forgive those who wrong us and show love to all (Jesus)