

Families and Relationships:

Key terms:

Commitment - This is an agreement with someone, a promise or pledge.

Covenant - Agreement based on promises between two sides. Often linked to religion so includes an agreement before and with God.

Responsibility - These are things we have to do as part of an agreement we have made.

Cohabitation - Living together as a couple and having a sexual relationship without being married to each other.

Contract - Binding agreement – marriage vows and certificate are evidence of this.

Marriage - Legal union between a man and a woman (some countries e.g. UK two people of the same sex) as partners in a relationship

Vows - Promises made during a wedding ceremony.

Civil Marriage registration – married but not through a religious ceremony (registry office). Since March 2014, same sex couples have been able to marry.

Civil Partnership - legal registration of a same sex couple. In law they are treated as if married and they have many of the legal protections which a married couple are entitled to.

Age of consent: This is when you are old enough by law to choose to have sex. 16 for anyone. You can have sex before then – but not considered mature enough/responsible enough and it is against the law.

Celibacy: If you are celibate then you have no sexual partner.

Adultery: This is sex between two people where at least one of them is married to someone else. (affair).

Chastity: idea of being sexually pure. In a relationship - faithful to your partner. Outside a relationship - not behaving sexually. Most religious groups - sex is only appropriate within marriage, so to be chaste is important.

Sex before marriage: This is sex between two unmarried single people.

Family - A group of people who are related by blood, marriage and adoption

Step family - A family that is formed - remarriage of a divorced or widowed person and that includes a child/ren.

Nuclear Family - A couple and their children – regarded as a basic social unit.

Extended family - A family that extends beyond parents and children e.g. grandparents and other relatives as well.

Polygamy - The practice or custom of having more than one wife at a time.

Bigamy - The offence of marrying someone while already married to another person.

Procreation - bringing babies into the world; producing offspring.

Marriage:

Why do people get married: Family expectations/Companionship/For sex/See as a religious duty/ legitimise a child/Share their lives with the person they love/Legal contract – brings security - protects the rights of each partner/Serious life-long - public commitment.

Who to marry: Religious people - taught to honour their family and their religion. Might expect them to marry someone who their family approved of, and who shared their religion.

For Muslims marriage is: A faithful, lifelong partnership/ A social contract- has a big impact on the whole community/ **Stable relationship** and true **sexual fulfilment**/ **Marriage intended by God for love and companionship**/ Love will develop within the marriage, but not necessary before/ Husbands and wife keep their own rights as **equals under God**/ The Qur'an teaches that husbands and wives are *'like garments for each other'* (Qur'an 2:187)/ Prevents sin/ May have an arranged marriage or a love marriage – some parents - find a suitable partner - know their children well/ According to Islamic teachings, **no one is forced to marry.** *"If a man gives his daughter in marriage while she is averse to it, then such marriage is invalid"* (Hadith) /Marriage to be the **foundation for family life** -the Hadith teach that **a man completes half of his religious responsibilities when he marries.**

For Christians marriage is: For the couple's mutual help and comfort - Genesis, the Bible describes Adam as being lonely so God's solution was to make a woman – Eve. (Genesis 2: 18-22)/ Men and women are equal but complimentary beings/**Become united**, into one unit - become 'one flesh' *"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh"* Genesis 2:24 **Place God intended for sex to take place-** only place to have sex./The Bible makes it clear that in marriage, sex is a wonderful gift *"The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin"* Catechism 2390/ **For Children to be raised** – stable family unit for children/ **Marriage is a sacrament**, a life-long union blessed by God - The couple should love each other *'as Christ loved the church'* (Ephesians 5:25)

Christian view Cohabitation – Many **Anglican and Protestant Christians** think that, although marriage is better, loving and faithful relationships are still good. **Catholic view on cohabitation: Believe that it is wrong and a sin.** *Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin"* Catechism 2390. Christians who are opposed to sex before marriage believe cohabitation is sinful.

Muslims view cohabitation – Against it as sex should take place within marriage. Believe a sexual relationship should only occur within marriage.

Christian view Same Sex Marriages: became legal in England in 2014. Many Christians opposed this - did not agree with the way marriage was being defined – simply as a **committed relationship**. Many Christians believe that marriage is a **unique relationship between a man and a woman** which involves their ability to create new life.

Muslim view Same Sex marriages: Islam forbids homosexual relationships, therefore many Muslims, like other religious people, were opposed to the changes in the law that made same-sex marriages legal

Why do marriages fail: Any difficulties can put a strain on a marriage E.g. Money/Arguments/ Illness/ Affairs/ Job issues / Addiction – alcohol, drug, gambling/ People changing/ Inability to have children.

Divorce: In England and Wales in 2012 an estimated 42% of all marriages ended in divorce. Divorce is allowed after 1 year if the marriage cannot be saved. A legally recognised divorce must be obtained through a court.

Christian churches try to prevent problems - pre-marriage courses/ support couple/ pray for them/read holy book/ vicar will give counselling and prayer and sacraments/ encourage forgiveness and reconciliation/ might go to 'relate'.

Christianity: Divorce and Remarriage: Traditionally Divorce not accepted. **Catholic Church** do not recognise as vows made before God cannot be broken between 2 baptised people/ sacrament/ life-long and permanent/ sanctity of marriage. Can separate only. *'What God has joined together, let no man separate'*. – Matthew 19:6 **Annulment** – difficult to get - marriage never valid e.g. one of the people was not able to consent to the marriage due to "mental incapacity" etc. or the marriage was never proper was not consummated e.g. no sexual relationship. No re-marriage as divorce not recognized. Can marry for the first time after annulment,

Liberal Christians e.g. Methodists: divorce is the lesser of two evils – stop suffering. e.g. compassionate when domestic violence or affair/ Forgiveness is important so given a second chance/ Allow remarriage if vows taken seriously - Give an interview before hand. *'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.'* (Matthew 6:14-15)

The Church of England (Anglicans) allows divorce, and divorced people are allowed to re-marry with permission from a **Bishop and the Priest**/ Some priests will only bless the marriage after a civil ceremony/ Some Priests won't perform ceremony as vows sacred and made before God.

The Nature of Families

In the UK: 25% (approx.) of children live in single parent families. Nuclear families are still most common in the West. There are now more step-families and there are same sex couples.

The role of parents: love/ care for/ raise to know right from wrong/ protection/ stability/ good education.

Christian Teachings: *'Love one another'* John 13:34 – relationships important to God. High value on family life- learn to love. Biblical times – extended family passed on religion customs and traditions. *'Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it'*. Proverbs 22:6.

Christian parents: Raise and educate child in faith and nurture spiritual life as part of family routine (want the best for them so show how to practise it – worship/pray daily/ behave) – see it as an act of love / provide for children/ share values – generosity, compassion, loyalty/ discipline fairly/ teach to be tolerant and listen to others/ Good role models/ teach moral values/ May send – to church schools and groups at church.

The role of Children: respect parents and obey them/ look after when older. **Christian Teachings:** Emphasise to respect parents *'Honour your father and mother'* Exodus 20:12 – particularly when parents are elderly and need support. *"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."* (Colossians 3:20)

Family: polygamy is illegal in Britain and bigamy is a crime. **Christians** believe that the ideal marriage is between a man and women - shown from creation – Adam and Eve. Paul writing to the Corinthians says each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband to avoid sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 7:2)

Islam allows polygamy - the Prophet Muhammad had several wives – reasons for it were to protect women from poverty and such a practice (polygamy) is not really considered applicable to modern life. Treatment had to be equal and with the consent of the first wife. It is illegal in Britain.

Christian view on same sex parents: Traditional view (Catholic and Church of England) The Bible teaches marriage between man and a woman- have different qualities which complement each other. Ideal is for children to grow up with a male and female role model as parents. Same sex couples cannot naturally produce children – one of the purposes of marriage. **Liberal view: Quaker** - far more important that a child grows up in a loving and secure home.

Muslim view on same sex parents: Do not approve - children to grow up with a male and female role model as parents. Since Muslims consider homosexual relationships and same-sex marriage to be morally wrong, same-sex parents would not set a good example to their children because the beliefs of Islam condemn their relationship.

Purpose of the family. Procreation. The Bible teaches that once married couples should be fruitful i.e. they should have children. *'As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it'*. Genesis 9:7/ **Teach Christian values** to children – supports growth of the church – **teach correct morals and values which supports society. Children are seen as wealth and blessing and a gift from God** – priceless *"Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him"* (Psalm 127:3-4) **Add goodness** – see the world afresh through children's eyes – **to participate with God in making a new creation in His image/ Protection of Children/ learn to live as part of a community/ teach right from wrong/ Stability for children and parents.** *"The family remains the most important grouping human beings have ever developed."* Church of England/ **Stability for society** – teaches to be responsible compassionate members of society. **God is Trinity – Relationship** – family reflects this relationship. **Extended Family in Islam** - For Muslims, the extended family - **basis of Islamic society and part of God's plan. Shapes moral values** and character of children/ **care for parents** – with respect and kindness *'Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents'* Quran 17: 23 – have parents living with them – **honour them / older members pass on wisdom and experience.** *'It is one of the greatest sins that a man should curse his parents.'* Hadith

Gender Equality

Gender equality – the idea that people should be given the same rights and opportunities regardless of whether they are male or female.

Gender prejudice – unfairly judging someone before the facts are known; holding biased opinions about an individual or group based on gender – this can lead to discrimination – call this Sexism.

Sexual stereotyping – having a fixed or general idea or image of how men and women will behave.

Gender discrimination – to act against someone on the basis of their gender; discrimination is usually seen as wrong and may be against the law. Mainly towards women – unkind comment through to murder e.g. not the same chances at work/ stricter rules in the culture/ not being allowed an education beyond a certain age/ Newspapers and TV - give impression that women - usual victims of violent crime. Makes women feel powerless- affects confidence and self-esteem

Sexual discrimination - happens when men and women are not treated equally in society. e.g. positions of power and rights. Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same RIGHTS and OPPORTUNITIES across all sectors of SOCIETY. People who believe women should have equal rights and want to work for change are called **feminists. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975)** made gender discrimination illegal in the UK but still earn lower pay for same jobs, men hold a higher proportion of senior positions.

Causes of gender prejudice: way brought up – parents/ Media/ Past experience/ Tradition

Traditional View: Roman Catholic Church (Catholic) – men and women created equal in the sight of God but with **different roles**. Under traditional roles, women were expected to: bring up children, run a Christian home, submit to their husbands – though husbands were also instructed to love their wives (Ephesians 5:22 – 24, 33), **take no part in Church leadership.** *'A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man'* (1 Timothy 2:12) **Does not allow women priests/** wrong to go against tradition/ Jesus - only male disciples/ 1994 – Pope – wrote an apostolic letter saying women could not be priests.

Modern view: Church of England (Anglican) – Many disagree with Traditional view – women can be leaders/ All are equal and made in God's image (Genesis 1: 27 The Bible) /Jesus was not sexist and taught women as well/ Mary was the first person to see Jesus after the resurrection/ important female leaders in the Early Church (Priscilla was a leader of the Church in Ephesus.)/Paul recommended Phoebe to the Church in Rome as a Deacon of the Church – Romans 16: 1 *'Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon in the church at Cenchrea'* Galatians 3:28 St Paul writes *'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* - The first female bishops in the Anglican Church (Church of England) were appointed in 2015. Most Christians today see marriage as an equal partnership where the different gifts of each person, male and female, strengthen family life.

Sexual Relationships

Sex before marriage became widely accepted in Britain in the 1960s, around the same time that women were first able to get hold of the Birth Control Pill. Before this, it had been a taboo – especially due to a higher risk of having a child outside of marriage.

Christians: Both the **Church of England (Anglicans)** and the **Roman Catholic Church** (Catholics) teach that people should not have sex before marriage. *Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.* (Hebrews 13:4) Sex gift from God - brings a couple closer/ expression of their love for one another/ it is for enjoyment/ for procreation- having children/ sex should be taken seriously - believe in abstinence – called sex before marriage a fornication - sin/ wrong to use people for sex/ irresponsible to spread sexually transmitted infections or risk pregnancy/ In the Bible Paul urged people to have sexual restraint and remain celibate.

Sex within marriage – part of a legal contract/special status/ balances joy of sex with responsibility/ commitment to spend rest of life/ part of religious and spiritual contract/ St Paul tells Christians that: *“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you..... So glorify God in your body.”* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – treat the body well. Sex - important part of marriage/ special - ultimate expression of the love and trust.

The Catholic Church: sex is for procreation of children and should be open to conceiving children.

Anglicans stress that marriage is the ideal context for sexual relationships (but argues that they MUST be within loving permanent relationships which would actually allow sex before marriage)

Quakers (a Christian denomination) sees marriage as the ideal context but accepts changing norms in society. It accepts that a couple can be faithful to each other in a loving, non-exploitative relationship outside marriage. *‘Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.’* (1 Peter 4:8)

Muslims: sex gift from God and marriage is the place where this strong instinct is to be treated carefully and managed. Muslims believe that casual sex is wrong and detracts from the dignity of those involved. Children have a right to be born into a loving family and to know their mother and father. Muslims believe that casual sex can lead to promiscuity (having sex with different partners) and other evils such as rape and deception. The Qur’an specifically forbids sex before marriage. Under Islamic law (Shari’ah) sex before marriage is considered, like adultery and rape, to be ZINAH – a sexual offense.

What is contraception? People use contraception mainly to protect themselves against pregnancy. For some there is a need to protect themselves or their partner against disease (e.g. HIV) or against passing on hereditary illness.

Artificial Methods: contraceptive devices which are made and then used. E.g. condom, IUD coil, pill

Natural Methods: contraceptive practices aimed at limiting the chance of pregnancy. E.g. Rhythm method

Permanent methods: are operations to prevent either the production of egg or sperm permanently. These are the only ones which are guaranteed to prevent pregnancy. E.g. sterilisation

Contemporary British Attitudes: Most people in Britain, accept the use of contraception for family planning - prevent unwanted pregnancies both from a personal point of view and also to help prevent over-population.

Family planning: controlling how many children couples have and when they have them.

Birth control and the Bible: no specific mention in the Bible of whether using contraception is wrong, simply because modern forms of contraception did not exist when it was written. The first commandment given to Adam and Eve was *‘Be fruitful and increase in number.’* (Genesis 1:28) Children are seen as a gift from God – something to be treasured Christians traditionally believed that it was God’s decision how many children a couple had, and that using contraception was interfering with his plan.

Roman Catholic view contraception: Every sex act open to procreation as key purpose of sex is procreation. No artificial contraception – seen as sinful and against God/ goes against Natural moral law/ could encourage selfishness and infidelity/One of the purposes of marriage is procreation. **‘Every sexual act should have the possibility of creating new life’** Humanae Vitae (1968) Most Catholics will use natural methods of contraception to space their family but some will ignore the teaching saying it is unreliable/ Won’t use abortive methods (those that prevent the implantation of a fertilised egg)/ The population explosion and AIDS - presented new challenges to this teaching.

Church of England (Anglican) view on contraception: responsible parenthood – those can bring up/ seen as a blessing when feel ready and able/ use both forms of contraception – to develop relationship before having children - space out pregnancies and avoid harm to the mother’s health **The Church of England** approved the use of artificial contraception in 1930. Many Anglicans wouldn’t use a form that discards a fertilised egg – see it as an abortion.

Muslim view on contraception: Used within marriage/ children gift of Allah – can practice responsible parenthood and only have children they can care for – decide when to start but should be open to having children. Some would use natural methods others artificial if wife’s health is at risk, to space out pregnancies (not those methods that prevent implantation). No direct teachings - *‘God wishes to lighten your burden; man was created weak.’* Qur’an 4:28. Some Muslims think using contraception is wrong, that it interferes with God’s plans – not an official teaching.

Adultery: Having a sexual relationship with someone who is not your partner. **Adultery is seen as wrong** by **Christians** and by society in general. Christians place a high value on faithfulness in marriage.

Seen as wrong because: It involves secrecy and lies/ betrayal of trust/ Breaking the marriage vows before God – to forsake all others and be faithful/ threatens the stable relationship for their children’s security/ Goes against the 10 commandments one of which says *‘You shall not commit adultery’ – Exodus 20:14/* Jesus taught that ‘lust’ which could lead to adultery is also wrong. *‘But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart’* Matthew 5:27-8. For Christians marriage is an unbreakable bond that demands total faithfulness.

Homosexuality.

Homosexual: word used to refer to people who are sexually attracted to people of the same gender.

Heterosexual: word used to describe people who are sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender.

Human sexuality: The word refers to the way people express themselves as sexual beings. People begin to have sexual feelings at puberty. This is a natural part of human biology.

Contemporary British views: 50 years ago it was illegal to be gay and there was widespread persecution if homosexuals. Today it is much more accepted and most young people do not see it as an issue. In 1994 the age of consent has been reduced to the same age as heterosexual sex and 2013 same-sex marriages have been recognised in law. These changes in law broadly reflect the changes in attitudes in British society.

Roman Catholic Viewpoint (Traditional) homosexual acts are wrong, but do not believe that gay people should be treated badly. Homosexual sex not open to procreation so does not fulfil one of the major purposes of sex/ Against Natural Moral Law – unnatural/ Sin/ **“But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”** (Mark 10:6-9) – does not accept same-sex relationships. Should be celibate. *Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.* **Catechism of the Catholic Church 1992, paras 2358-9**

Church of England (Moderate) The Church of England (Anglicans) welcomes homosexual Christians who live in faithful, committed relationship, but it does not allow them to marry in Church.

Quaker Christians (Liberal) Some Christians believe that loving, faithful homosexual relationships to be just as holy as heterosexual relationships and argue that if all are made in the ‘image of God’ *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them.”* (Genesis 1:27) - it is natural for that person to be gay Quakers in the UK fully accept homosexuals into their community and do not condemn those who have homosexual relationships. Quakers believe that the quality of the relationship is what is important –. The test is whether there is genuine, selfless (AGAPE) love between a couple. *‘To reject people on the grounds of their sexual behaviour is a denial of God’s creation. - Towards a Quaker View of Sex, 1963*

Muslim View on Homosexuality Islam is against homosexuality and homosexual relationships/ forbidden/ most Muslim countries homosexuality is against the law/ Against the natural law created by God. It is seen as a crime against Allah. *‘Must you, unlike [other] people, lust after males and abandon the wives God has created for you? You are exceeding all bounds’* The prophet Lut spoke Allah’s words Qur’an 26:165-166. The punishment for engaging in homosexual acts is sometimes severe in Muslim majority countries – believe that they will be judged by God. In Britain there are some organisations run by Muslims such as the **‘Inclusive Mosque Initiative’**, that believe that homosexuality should be accepted in Islam. While many British Muslims may not approve of homosexuality, they do accept it as part of British society