

Year 8 RE- Does religion help people to be good?

Believing – considering religious beliefs, teachings, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth

Key words

Agape- unconditional love for humankind

Ethical decision making

Christians have different beliefs and approaches when it comes to ethical decision making. These include:

moral absolutism- is the belief that actions are intrinsically right or wrong

situation ethics-theory where the situation is taken into account first, before deciding on the rules of right and wrong.

Approaches to decision-making

There are a variety of approaches to decision making and each approach has its positives and negatives.

There are two different types of theories:

deontological theory, which focuses on the actions themselves being right or wrong

teleological theory, which focuses on the consequences or outcomes of the actions being classed as right or wrong

Christian Teaching

In the scriptures the love that Jesus talks about and refers to is agape love. The term agape refers to unconditional love. Christianity teaches that this is the highest type of love, and it is the love that Jesus has for humans. Agape involves feeling so much love for someone that you put them before yourself.

The most famous teaching of Christ on this is from the Last Supper in John's Gospel. Jesus gives his final Commandment to his apostles to love one another.

And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.

— John 13:34-35

Situation ethics

Situation ethics is a theory where the situation is taken into account first, before deciding on the rules of right and wrong. There is no set of rules, because what might be considered immoral in one situation could be considered the most moral thing to do in another.

This approach is teleological rather than deontological as it is focused on the purpose and reason for the actions rather than the actions themselves.

As each situation is different, the outcome therefore will be too. This approach allows the individual to focus on all the factors involved and weigh them up. Situation ethics state that there are no moral laws or rules and that the context is important. The general rule of this approach is that the correct action should be the most loving action.

Virtue ethics

The concept of virtue ethics is based on the morality of the individual making decisions, rather than the act or outcome.

Virtue ethics are concerned with the whole person and how they live, rather than one act. A virtuous

person will seek to do the right thing and take the right action at all times. Rather than an act being judged, the individual is judged on how they live and a good act can only be classed as good if a virtuous person would carry out that act

Case Study

Oscar Romero was born on 15th August 1917 in El Salvador

Ordained a priest in 1942 in Rome and returned to become a parish priest in 1944. Made Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977 – the leader of the Catholic Church in El Salvador. A few weeks after Romero was appointed as archbishop, his friend and a priest, Father Grande, was murdered. Romero began to speak out on behalf of the landless peasants living in poverty, criticising the corrupt rulers of the country.

In a time of heavy press censorship, his weekly radio broadcasts were often the only way people could find out the truth about what was happening in their country.



Year 8 RE- Do we need to prove God's existence?

Believing – considering religious beliefs, teachings, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth

Cosmological argument – First cause argument Thomas Aquinas argued that every effect has a cause, there has to be a first cause and the first cause is God. Proves God – because God is eternal God must be the first cause/Bible says 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Disproves God – If everything needs a cause what causes God



Teleological argument – Design argument William Paley said a watch is complicated, it needs a designer. The world too is designed and therefore it requires a designer which is God. Proves God – World is so intricate, World was created at just the right time to bring it into existence Disproves God – There is no proof God was the designer/ Evolution suggests the world naturally developed over time



Suffering Disproves God – The problem of suffering is: why would an all loving, all knowing, all powerful God allow suffering to exist? Atheists conclude he wouldn't and therefore there is no God.

Proves God - Muslims believe suffering is a test of faith. They believe it is part of QADR (God's plan) and your reaction will determine whether you go to Paradise or Jahannam. The Qur'an states, 'We will test your steadfastness with fear, famine, loss of property, life and crops. Suffering may also be a result of people listening to Shaytan. In Christianity they are taught in the Bible that 'Suffering is part of their training' and they should 'Love their neighbour'. They are also taught 'If you want to come with me, carry your cross and follow me.'

Evil – Where does it come from? Disproves God –

Psychological response – Some people are born with a biological predisposition towards psychopathic behaviour.

Sociological response - suggests our society can make use evil. From our home lives, to our experiences and to our exposure to certain media content can make us evil. This means we are not born like it.

Proves God - Religious response – Christianity suggests that God created a good world in which people had freedom. Evil can come from freewill. Some Christians believe that all people inherited the tendency to sin from Adam and Eve. This belief is called original sin. The bible states, 'the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth'. Secondly, Christianity suggests evil came from temptation from Satan. Surely God would not allow a devil to commit such evil acts?

Key Words

Cosmological Argument / First cause argument-There must have been auncaused cause that made everything happen. God is the uncaused ; the unmoved mover

Design Argument- The universe is so complex that it must have had a designer; that designer must be omnipotent and therefore can only be God

Free Will -The idea that humans are free to make their own choices

