
A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Context:

When you study Religious Studies, you will study Philosophy, Ethics and Christianity. In Philosophy you will learn to compare and analyse arguments based on logic and observation. In Ethics, you will look at whether morals are absolute or relative. A deeper study of Christianity allows you to discuss and critique who Christians think God is, and how this impacts their practices, morality and interactions with others. You will also consider the threat of secularisation and Atheism to Christianity and how the Church is dealing with an ever changing world.

Reading Material:

- Gaarder, J. *Sophie's World*, London: Phoenix House 1995
- Craig, E. *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP 2002
- McGrath, A. *Christianity: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing 2015
- Vardy, P. *The Puzzle of Christianity*, Harper Collins (2016)
- Our studied religion is Christianity and a good background knowledge of the Bible is important. The Bible Project series is a good read for this. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo&list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZiVHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh>

Tasks:

- Put together fact-files (approx. 1-2 sides each) about the following thinkers / philosophers: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Jeremy Bentham, JS Mill, Peter Singer, Joseph Fletcher. What can you find out about their contributions to debates about morality / ethics?
- Collect or bookmark articles dealing with ethical issues that crop up over the next few months; look out for topics such as abortion, euthanasia, sexuality incl. polyamory, use of animals for medical research
- Conduct some research into the origins of Christianity. What might be considered unique about Christian faith and life? Put together some notes on the covenants with Abraham and Moses in the Old Testament. What does the Old Testament say about the promised Messiah?
- <http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/> - pick 3 or 4 of these and make a note of how you get on.

To watch

Podcasts / YouTube / TED talks:

- *Tsunami (where was God?)* – A channel 4 programme that examines how the 2004 boxing day Tsunami both challenged and strengthened people's faith in God

Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jM_tCFF8gwM

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3hDIDvjLNM>

- *The story of God* – Morgan Freeman explores miracles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Tt1LhyhiTM>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11/episodes/player> - 'The Moral Maze'
- <https://thepanpsycast.com/episodes-by-category> - pick a selection from the Ethics and Philosophy of Religion sections.
- [https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Beyond Right and Wrong](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Beyond_Right_and_Wrong)

Netflix:

- *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman* (3 seasons)
- *The Good Place* – funny as well as ethical!

iPlayer:

- *Young, Welsh and pretty religious* – Episodes 1&2 particularly relevant
- *The Big Questions with Nicky Campbell* – ethical debate
- *Sacred Wonders* – spectacular documentary.