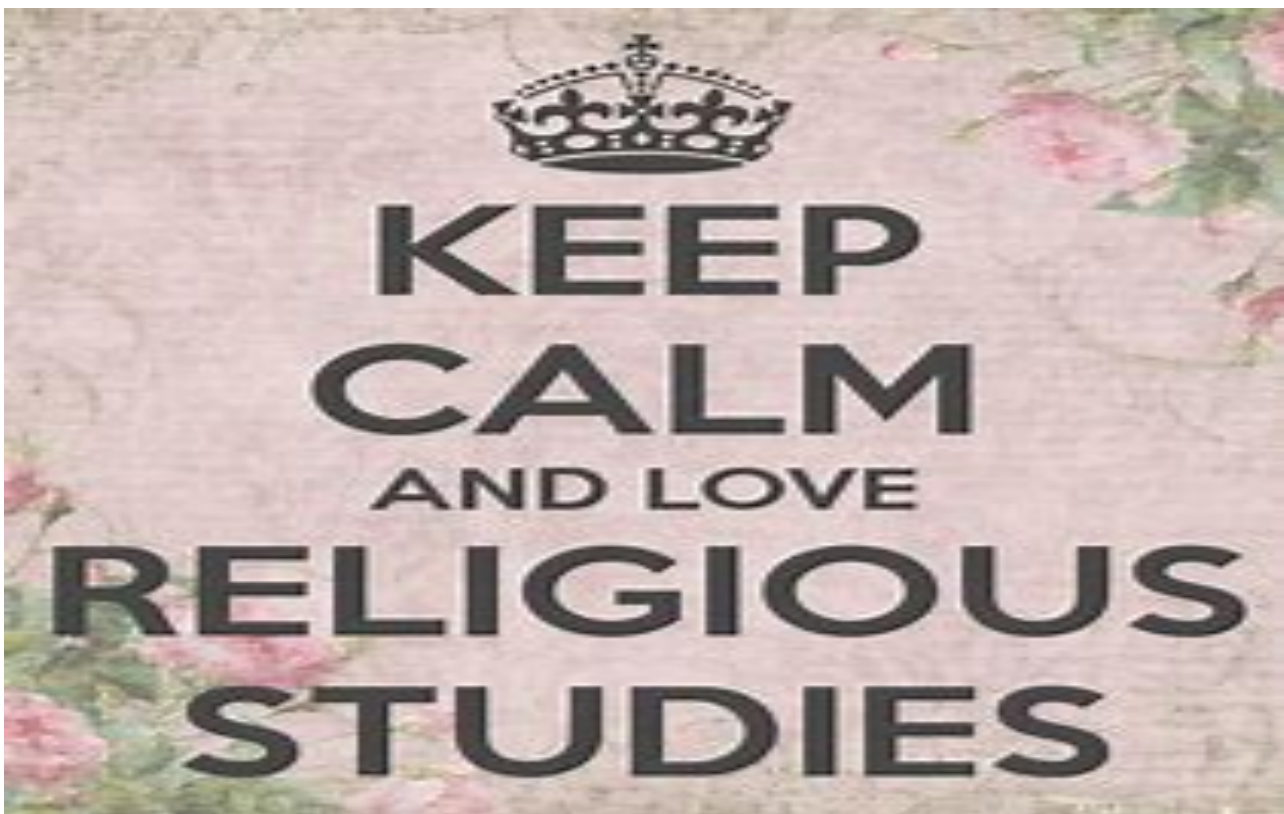


A Level Religious Studies 'Bridging Project'



Name:

Welcome to A level religious studies at Macmillan Academy Post 16. We are delighted to have you on board and hope that you will enjoy completing this bridging project. We would like you to complete as much of it as you can and bring along this booklet and your responses when you start your new course with us.

At A level you will study Philosophy, ethics and religion (Christianity). The aim of this project is to give you a great head-start with your understanding of the course and hopefully get you eager and interested to learn the subject.

Specification and assessment information

Specification: The exam board for this A Level is AQA (details can be found in the 'useful links' section of this pack). There are two components to this A Level;

Philosophy of Religion and Ethics looking at; philosophical issues such as arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil and religious language, various ethical theories and how they can be applied to issues such as animal cloning, capital punishment and embryo research.

A study of Christianity looking at areas such as sources of wisdom and authority, God, life after death, religious identity, attitudes towards science, sexuality and secularisation.

Assessment: You will sit TWO exams at the end of the course. You will be required to write, at length, about the topics you have studied- you will be assessed through essay-based questions. Here are some sample exam questions...

- 'Language game theory shows that religious language is meaningful.' Evaluate this claim. [15 marks]
- Examine the differences between a deontological and a teleological approach to religious ethical decision-making. Illustrate your answer with reference to lying. [10 marks]
- Examine differing views about the use of conscience as a guide to moral decision-making. [10 marks]
- Examine how Christian teaching helps Christians respond to the challenge of secularisation. [10 marks]
- 'Religious experience gives Christians knowledge of God.' Critically examine and evaluate this view with reference to the dialogue between Christianity and Philosophy [25 marks]

A Level: Assessment format

Study of Religion:
THREE hour exam

- TWO x 10 mark essays
- TWO x 15 mark essays
- TWO x 25 mark essays

Philosophy and Ethics:
THREE hour exam

- FOUR x 10 mark essays
- FOUR x 15 mark essays

You will be equally assessed on two assessment objectives.
• AO1: your ability to **demonstrate knowledge & understanding**
• AO2: your ability to **analyse and evaluate**

Here's a series of 5 tasks to help you get started both to write in the booklet or on paper/word document:

1. **Jaffa cakes** – cake or biscuit? *page 3-5*
2. **The trolley dilemma** and modern transport *page 6-7*
3. **Jim and the Indians** *page 8-9*
4. **Quizzes** *page 9*
5. **Miracles** *page 10-11*
6. **Something extra plus contacts** *page 12*

Task 1 Jaffa cakes – a cake or a biscuit?

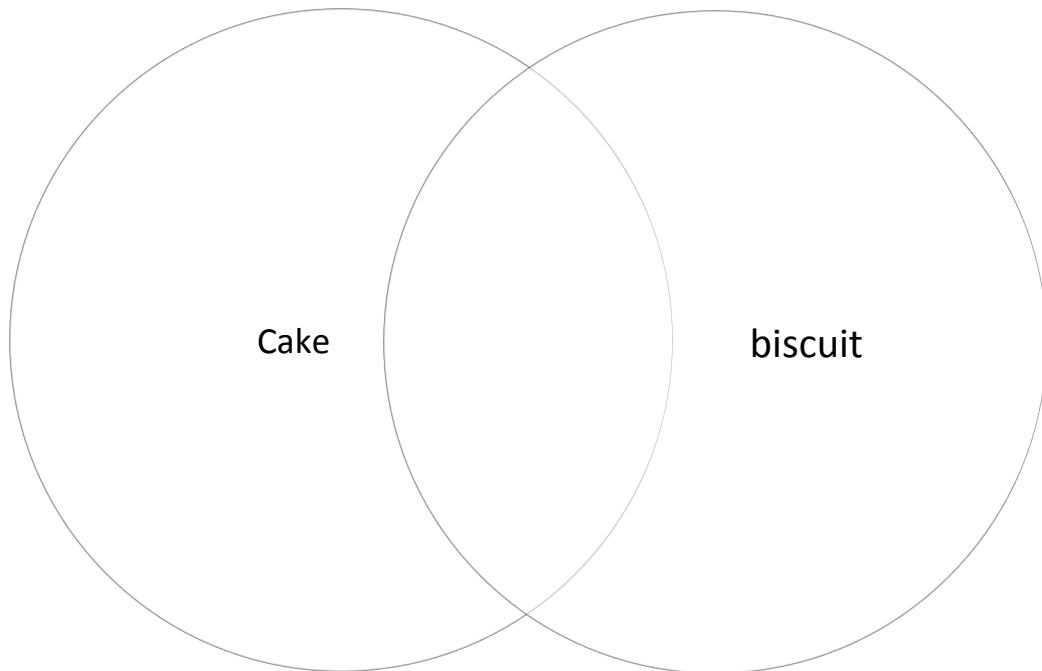
A. What is your initial reaction?

It's a _____

It's a delicious structure consisting of a small sponge with a chocolate cap covering a veneer of orange jelly. It is arguably Britain's greatest invention after the steam engine and the light bulb.

But is a Jaffa Cake actually a biscuit?

B. Use the Venn diagram to see if it is possible for it to be a cake or a biscuit or both



Here's some ideas to help – if needed

- Jaffa Cakes are more biscuit than cake in several ways. They are packaged like biscuits, and they are marketed like biscuits: they are usually found in the biscuit aisle in shops.
- Does size matter? Jaffa Cakes are more biscuit-sized than cake-sized. Linked to this, cakes are often eaten with a fork, while biscuits tend to be held in the hand.
- On the other hand, they have fundamental cake-esque qualities. There was, for example, the name. They are called Jaffa Cakes, not Jaffa Biscuits. Thus, they have ingredients of a traditional sponge cake: eggs, flour and sugar. And when Jaffa Cakes go stale they become hard, unlike biscuits, which become soft.

C. Any other thoughts on this? What is your opinion – biscuit or cake?

D) Here's the science – watch the video – has it changed your mind?

YES

No

- <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=jaffa+cake+cake+or+biscuit+video&&view=detail&mid=FD87A35008D25362D7C DFD87A35008D25362D7CD&FORM=VRDGAR>
- Why does this matter?
- To test the significance of size, the winner of The Great British Bake Off 2013, Frances Quinn, was asked to bake the most ginormous Jaffa Cake the world has ever seen - the size of a flying saucer, at 124cm in diameter, weighing in at 50kg, and containing 120 eggs and 30 litres of jelly.

- Tim Crane, Knightsbridge Professor of Philosophy at Cambridge University, does not believe that this XXXXXXXXXXXXL Jaffa Cake is any more cake-like than its normal-sized Jaffa Cake sibling. "These days you see all sorts of tiny cakes for sale, some of them much smaller than Jaffa Cakes," he says. "And there's nothing incoherent about a giant biscuit." The immediate implication of Mr Potter's ruling was financial. But Prof Crane says the question "Cake or Biscuit?" touches on a profound philosophical problem. "How do our concepts relate to reality?" Which aspects of our classification of the world come from the world itself and which come from us? There is no record of the 20th Century philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, ever tasting a Jaffa Cake, though there is evidence that he was partial towards a bun. But his ideas are relevant to the Jaffa Cake puzzle. We are tempted to think that every concept must have a strict definition to be useable. But Wittgenstein pointed out that there are many "family-resemblance" concepts, as he called them. Family members can look alike without sharing a single characteristic. Some might have distinctive cheek bones, others a prominent nose, etc.

Take the concept of "game".

- Some games involve a ball, some don't.
- Some involve teams, some don't.
- Some are competitive, some are not.
- There is no characteristic that all games have in common.

E) Task

Using the same principle list as many things as you can think of in a house. Then try to categorise them. (you might find putting them on post-its might be helpful then you can move them around into different categories)

- What sort of categories can you have? By room, essential, non-essential.
- What have you discovered?
 - Our society is full of categories that it tries to put us all in....
 - Watch the video clip from "one tree hill" from 7.02-12.13mins
- <http://videosever.macmillan-academy.org.uk/View.aspx?id=8735~4x~8DS68HtU>
 - What categories are you aware of?



- Do they/ should they matter? Why?

- How does this all fit in? Jaffa cake – cake or biscuit? Well we have to about human sexuality – So the question is are we just male/female. It seems society thinks so. Think of expectations, roles, media, jobs, around us...
- **Does it matter? Should it matter? –**

Here are the 56 different gender types on Facebook MR, Ms, Miss, Mrs, gender, trans, gender fluid.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agender • Androgyne • Androgynous • Bigender • Cis • Cisgender • Cis Female • Cis Male • Cis Man • Cis Woman • Cisgender Female • Cisgender Male • Cisgender Man • Cisgender Woman • Female to Male • FTM • Gender Fluid • Gender Nonconforming • Gender Questioning • Gender Variant • Genderqueer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersex • Male to Female • MTF • Neither • Neutrois • Non-binary • Other • Pangender • Trans • Trans* • Trans Female • Trans* Female • Trans Male • Trans* Male • Trans Man • Trans* Man • Trans Person • Trans* Person • Trans Woman • Trans* Woman • Transfeminine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender • Transgender Female • Transgender Male • Transgender Man • Transgender Person • Transgender Woman • Transmasculine • Transsexual • Transsexual Female • Transsexual Male • Transsexual Person • Transsexual Woman • Two-Spirit <p>Cis/Cisgender — Cisgender is essentially the opposite of transgender (<i>cis-</i> being Latin for "on this side of" versus <i>trans-</i>, "on the other side"). People who identify as cisgender are males or females whose gender aligns with their birth sex.</p>
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- Equally, some concepts can operate with overlapping similarities. And there is no strict definition of "cake" or "biscuit" that compels us to place the Jaffa Cake under either category.
- This should be perhaps how we should see humans?

What are your thoughts on this exercise going from whether a Jaffa cake is a cake or biscuit to labels we use for people and if it is important with things like gender with adverts being banned (Aptamil baby milk were banned for showing baby boys being a scientist and baby girls being a ballerina) for supporting stereotype roles, with everything from programmes like Love Island having almost a set type of male and female on there. Are labels important?

Howe does this fit in with A level RS? We look at labels and language and gender within the course from both philosophy and Christianity eg if you are born male but transition to be female have you gone against God’s wishes as he/she made you how he/she wanted you to be? Then what of plastic surgery or even hair dyes or make up?

2. The Trolley Dilemma and modern transport

Consider your own responses to the following questions and fill your responses underneath:

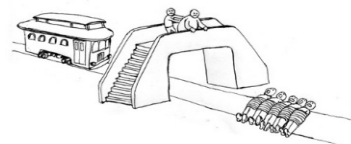
a. How do YOU decide if something is right or wrong? What 'criteria' do you consider?

b. Can you think of actions that you think are always right or always wrong? What are they? What are your justifications?

c. Give some examples of situations where you think a 'bad' action is justifiable? What are they? What are your justifications?

d. How important is the intention behind an action? What if there is a good intention behind a 'bad' action? What if there is a selfish intention behind a 'good' action?

e. Watch the following TED talk and the follow up video (both deal with the Trolley dilemma. Make notes on this issue.



<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+trolley+problem&&view=detail&mid=9917148D9D9C6E69B7079917148D9D9C6E69B707&&FORM=VRDGAR>

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Trolley+Problem+Kant&&view=detail&mid=F7254F9152C5645031E1F7254F9152C5645031E1&&FORM=VRDGAR>

f. What would you do and why?

g. List the scenarios of the 5 against 1 that might make you change your mind either way eg what if the 5 were on day release from prison – would it matter what they had done? What if the 5 all were over 80 with dementia? Your friends or family? What if the one was a member of your family or a significant other or a doctor working on a cure for cancer or covid-19?

h. The driverless car

With new modern technology, ethicists and philosophers are being employed to help debate and how to programme driverless cars.



<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=trolley+dilemma+-+driverless+cars&&view=detail&mid=542013EF2F2F4E8BF619542013EF2F2F4E8BF619&&FORM=VRDGAR>

Watch the above video.

How do you think driverless cars should be programmed? Always protect the driver? (what if the driver isn't the owner but a reckless thief?), always protect the occupants of the car? Save the greatest number (which may kill the driver) or save the safest driver (so kill the driver who has points, not wearing a seatbelt or convicted for drug/drink driving or using their mobiles) or save the safer driver with a clean licence or kill the single person versus the family in a car? Write a variety of ideas (there's just a few I've thought of – there will be lots of others) on how you think it should be programmed and why.

How does this fit? The Trolley Dilemma is one of the key scenarios that demonstrates the 2 different views of Bentham and Kant – both are on the year 2 syllabus. The modern driverless car brings it up to date and shows how philosophy and ethics are being used with modern technology.

3. Jim and the Indians

Read the following thought experiment and answer the questions underneath

“Jim finds himself in the central square of a small South American town. Tied up against the wall are a row of twenty Indians, most terrified, a few defiant, in front of them several armed men in uniform. A heavy man in a sweat-stained khaki shirt turns out to be the captain in charge and, after a good deal of questioning of Jim which establishes that he got there by accident while on a botanical expedition, explains that the Indians are a random group of the inhabitants who, after recent acts of protest against the government, are just about to be killed to remind other possible protestors of the advantages of not protesting. However, since Jim is an honoured visitor from another land, the captain is happy to offer him a guest’s privilege of killing one of the Indians himself. If Jim accepts, then as a special mark of the occasion, the other Indians will be let off. Of course, if Jim refuses, then there is no special occasion, and Pedro here will do what he was about to do when Jim arrived, and kill them all. Jim, with some desperate recollection of schoolboy fiction, wonders whether if he got hold of a gun, he could hold the captain, Pedro and the rest of the soldiers to threat, but it is quite clear from the set-up that nothing of the sort is going to work: any attempt at that sort of thing will mean that all the Indians will be killed, and himself. The men against the wall, and the other villagers understand the situation, and are obviously begging him to accept. What should he do?”

What should Jim do and why?

Now carry on reading a teacher’s response to the usual responses from students – don’t be disheartened if that’s what you put.

The vast majority of students have no qualms accepting the obvious utilitarian answer, namely that Jim should clearly kill one Indian to save the rest. It’s simple maths that led them to that conclusion: one dead is better than twenty dead (especially if the one is among the twenty). Most students interpreted Jim’s case as a mere variant of Foot’s and Thomson’s trolley problems, where you have to decide whether it is justified to kill somebody (who would survive if you didn’t intervene) to save the lives of (more than one) others (who would die if you didn’t intervene). These cases are usually used to discuss the question whether killing is really worse than letting die, and if yes, why. The default position for Utilitarians is of course that we are just as responsible and culpable for what we let happen as for what we do ourselves. Not saving somebody is just as bad as killing somebody, and not saving two or more is worse. It follows that not killing somebody if that is the only way to save two or more is wrong.

Now, although I don’t think that ethics can and should be reduced to mathematics, I’m willing to accept or concede that, if all things are equal, our moral responsibility extends not only to what we do, but also to what we allow to happen. But Jim’s case is in one crucial respect very different from the usual kill-or-let-die situations, and I’m a bit puzzled that very few of my students noticed this and that none of them seems to have realised the significance of that difference. What I’m talking about is the fact that, in contrast to the trolley problems discussed by Foot and Thomson, Williams’s scenario involves *another agent*, or rather two, namely “the captain” and “Pedro”. This means that if Jim refuses to kill one of the Indians, the others will not just die, but rather they may, or may not, be killed by somebody else. If they are killed, then this does not happen because Jim has not killed anyone, but because the captain gives the order to kill them, and Pedro executes the order. Nothing that Jim could do or not do, would *cause* or *compel* the captain to give the order, nor Pedro to execute it. It’s entirely up to *them* to decide whether the captured Indians live or die. If Jim does what they ask him to do, they could still kill the rest of the Indians. Conversely, if Jim refuses, they may still decide to let everyone go. The only real power that Jim has in this situation is the power that is given to him by the captain: to either kill one of the Indians or not to kill one of the Indians. Or more precisely, he has been granted the power to kill someone, but he does *not* have the power to *save* anyone (because neither his killing someone nor his not killing anyone prevents any of the Indians from being killed). This means that he *would* be responsible and culpable for killing one of the Indians, but he would *not* be responsible and culpable for the death of the Indians if he refused to kill anyone and they were subsequently killed by Pedro.

The situation in which Jim finds himself is not really one in which he has to decide whether it is better to kill one person than to let more than one person die. The situation is rather one in which somebody asks him to do what they tell him to do (namely commit a terrible crime: that of killing an innocent person) or else they will do something very nasty, namely murder lots of people, including that one. Would you say that it’s clearly “the most moral action”, as one of my students said about Jim’s killing of the Indian?

Let's look again at Jim's situation. Jim is asked to kill one of the Indians. He is being told that the others will be free to go if he complies. So he picks one of them - let's call him Joe – and he kills him. Now what would happen if he refused? Most likely Pedro would kill all of the Indians, including Joe. We can assume that killing the Indians is morally wrong. They are innocent people. Their killing is an act of state terrorism. It's the worst kind of crime. When Pedro finally kills Joe, then he does something that is deeply reprehensible. It is clearly morally wrong. It is an act of evil. But if killing Joe is an act of evil when Pedro does it, why then should it suddenly be morally right, even laudable, when Jim does it? Killing Joe is an evil act, and it *remains* an evil act no matter who does the killing. Therefore, Jim should not kill the Indian.

Having read the next section is it as clear cut – why/ why not? What if Jim knew the Indian, he was told to kill – his best friend perhaps?

4. Quizzes (we all like quizzes!) Complete these two quizzes and **write what this has taught you about yourself** and your personal views on philosophy, ethics and morality. (There's no right or wrong answer – it is just showing you what philosophical and ethical stance you take in situations you may not be aware of!)

<https://www.philosophyexperiments.com/moralityplay/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/quiz/2012/jan/14/observer-ethical-awards-kids-2012-quiz>

https://www.media-partners.com/blog/moment_of_truth_online_ethics_quiz.htm

How does this fit in? It is another scenario that we look at. The question “Should Jim kill the Indian” refers to a thought experiment that the British philosopher Bernard Williams used forty years ago in his critique of Utilitarianism (in: JJC Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism: For and Against*, 1973) to illustrate the morally dubious consequences that Utilitarianism would have us accept. In that way it shows the downfall of one of the theories that is on the syllabus.

5. Christianity – Miracles

MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE

Throughout the Bible the biblical writers seem to assume that God can and does perform miracles. As such accounts are written as though the events recorded actually occurred. However, this is not to say that they are eye witness accounts. For example, no one was there to witness the creation of the world as recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. Elsewhere, the human authors of the Bible were not running around with notepads writing things down as they happened. Rather, the written accounts typically began as oral tradition which was passed down through many generations before being written down. That this is the case is reinforced in the New Testament where we read Jesus telling his disciples that after he has gone, *'the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you'* (John 14:26). Furthermore, the biblical accounts were often written for a specific purpose. For example, the Gospel of John tells us that the accounts of Jesus' miracles recorded in the book are intended to lead people to faith in Jesus:

'Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.' (John 20:30).

Most frequently in the New Testament it is said that Jesus acted out of compassion to heal the sick, for example in Matthew 14:14, it says: 'When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.'

However even in the New Testament miracles are not always regarded as a good thing. In Matthew 12:39 reads: 'But Jesus replied, "Only an evil, adulterous generation would demand a miraculous sign; but the only sign I will give them is the sign of the prophet Jonah.'

In the Bible events which cause wonder are described as miracles, however there is no understanding of natural laws, they are more unusual or unexplained events, put simply events it is thought God could do; but humans cannot without God's aid. These are described as supernatural miracles.

Task: Research and find out the definition of Liberal and supernatural miracles and then use this information to describe in each case what you think they are by circling what you think and explaining why:

Liberal –

Supernatural -

Moses and the 10 plagues against Egypt:

The Jews (Israelites) are in slavery in Egypt. Moses requests that Pharaoh let the Jewish people go but he refuses. As a result, God sends a series of plagues onto the Egyptians. The Nile turns to blood, frogs, gnats, and flies swarm the land; livestock die; people are affected by boils; hail and locusts destroy crops; the land is covered in darkness for 3 days and finally the first born in every Egyptian house die. (Exodus 7:12).

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

The Exodus and the crossing of the Red (or reed) Sea:

After allowing the Israelites to go Pharaoh changes his mind and chases after them. The Israelites are trapped by the sea with the Egyptian army closing in behind them. Moses holds out his staff and the waters part. The Israelites cross through on dry land in safety. When the Egyptian army tries to cross as well but the waters close in around them and they all drown. (Exodus 14)

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

Joshua and the fall of Jericho:

After entering the land of Canaan (the Promised Land) the Israelites are told to capture the city of Jericho. Joshua and the Israelites walk around the city once a day for 6 days. On the 7th day they walk around the city 7 times, blow their trumpets and the walls fall down. As a result they capture Jericho. (Joshua 6:1-21).

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

Some New Testament miracles:

Changing water into wine:

Jesus' first miracle in Cana in Galilee. The wine runs out at a Jewish wedding Jesus is attending. His mother asks him to do something about it so he asks for 6 large stone jars to be filled with water. When the master of the banquet is given some of the water to taste he finds it has turned into the finest of wines. (John 2:1-11).

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

Healing a paralysed man:

Jesus was preaching to a packed audience in a home in Capernaum. Some men brought a paralysed man to Jesus for him to heal. They could not get through the crowds, so they lowered him through the roof. On seeing the man Jesus immediately told him his sins were forgiven. Some teachers of law condemned Jesus for saying this claiming only God could forgive sins. After explaining why he had said this Jesus tells the paralysed man to get up, and take his mat and walk. This he did. (Mark 2:1-12).

Supernatural /Liberal Why? _____

Walking on water:

One windy night the disciples were on the Sea of Galilee crossing from one side to the other. Out of the boat they saw a ghost but then when they looked closer they saw it was Jesus walking out towards them on the sea. When he reached them he got into the boat and the wind died down. (Matthew 14:22-33).

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

Feeding the 5000:

Jesus had been teaching the crowds. It was late and the people needed to eat. Jesus told his disciples to bring some food to feed the people but all they could get were 5 loaves and 2 fishes, given to them by a young boy. Jesus blessed this small portion of food and then proceeded to distribute it to the 5000 people gathered there. When the disciples had cleared up there were 12 baskets of leftovers. (Luke 9:12-17).

Supernatural/ Liberal Why? _____

Task

- i. Research one of the Old Testament miracles – think of and/or find out alternatives to it being described as a miracle with our modern technology
- ii. Research one of the New Testament miracles – think of and/or find out alternatives to it being described as a miracle with our modern technology
- iii. Research a modern-day miracle. Write about the event then explain why some would see it as a miracle and others would not. Give reasons for both views.

How does this fit in? Miracles are part of the syllabus you will research. Part of this is to see alternatives that might explain these events. It can also be part of the dialogues section where apart from the religions section (Christianity) is combined with the philosophy and ethics section for you to answer.

For something extra:

Useful links

www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/as-and-a-level/religiousstudies-7061/introduction

It is imperative that you familiarise yourself with the AQA website, where you can access course information as well as specimen/ past papers and mark schemes

www.philosophybites.com Podcasts of interviews on philosophical topics

www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk A useful website that gives information about the various forms of animal research and experimentation; a topic that is specifically identified as an area of study for the course

www.reasonablefaith.org A website that includes various theological and philosophical issues

Also Chester University are running some excellent lectures that are 30 mins long plus questions and are aimed at A level RS students. If you are interested let one of us know from the contacts below and we can send you the details to join the webinars – afterwards the lectures are uploaded to YouTube. Listen in and make some notes!

Contact

Mrs Craig j.craig@macademy.org.uk
Head of Ks4 and Ks5 Religious studies Macmillan Academy
Miss Thomas r.thomas@macademy.org.uk
Head of KS3 Religious Studies Macmillan Academy