

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The syllabus aims to develop a sympathetic understanding of the nature and significance of religion through the study of the Bible (and in Section B, through Christian traditions).
2. Candidates should be able to
 - (a) appreciate the significance of facts and related ideas found in the passages they study, both in their own setting and in their relevance for today.
 - (b) relate the religious beliefs and practices they study to their place and importance in modern society.
 - (c) appreciate the part religious belief can play in both personal and public life.
3. In the context of the examination, candidates should be able to deal constructively and creatively with the source material which they are permitted to use in following the “open-book” format. (The principal aim in using an “open-book” format is to discourage candidates from preparing for the examination by memorizing texts.)

THE EXAMINATION

1. There will be one paper of 2½ hours. It will be divided into the following two sections with a 45-minute break in between:
SECTION A - The Fulfilment of God’s Promises in the Life of Jesus the Christ (1½hour)
SECTION B - Personal and Social Problems (1 hour)
2. There will be no compulsory questions.
3. Candidates will be required to answer five questions, three chosen from Section A and two chosen from Section B. Each question carries 20% of the marks.
4. In Section A candidates will be required to answer three out of five questions.
5. In Section B candidates will be required to answer two out of four questions.
6. Questions will be based entirely on the set texts, but candidates will be given credit for material based on other passages provided that they are able to show the relevance of such material.
7. The examination will follow an “open-book” format. Candidates will be permitted to bring authorized copies of the Bible into the examination†.

† See Annex II of this handbook.

THE SYLLABUS

SECTION A - THE FULFILMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS THE CHRIST

I. BACKGROUND

- (a) The Faith of the Old Testament
 - (i) The Passover (Exodus 12:21-42)
 - (ii) The Sinai Covenant (Exodus 19:1-8, 20:1-21)
 - (iii) Promise of a New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-28)
 - (iv) The Messianic Hope (Isaiah 11:1-9)
- (b) Palestine in the First Century A.D.
 - (i) Roman occupation
 - (ii) Jewish factions (Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots)
 - (iii) People: peasants, fishermen, landowners, craftsmen, businessmen, officials (taxcollectors, priests, Levites, synagogue elders)
- (c) Defining and understanding Biblical Terms, Ceremonies and Festivals.

II. JESUS, A HISTORICAL PERSON

- (a) Heading (Mark 1:1)
- (b) Birth and childhood (Matthew 1:18-25, 2:1-23; Luke 1:26-56, 2:1-52)
- (c) John the Baptist (Mark 1:2-8; Mark 6:14-29)
- (d) Baptism (Mark 1:9-11)
- (e) Temptation (Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13)

III. JESUS AS THE MESSIAH

- (a) The Son of Man has to suffer (Mark 8:31-33, 9:9-13, 30-32, 10:32-45)
- (b) Jesus' identity is hidden (Mark 1:32-34, 40-45, 3:7-12, 5:21-43, 7:24-30, 31-37, 8:22-30, 9:1-10)
- (c) Conflicts (Mark 2:1-12, 15-28, 3:1-6, 7:1-13, 8:11-13, 10:1-12, 11:15-19, 27-33, 12:1-40)

IV. JESUS THE TEACHER

- (a) The Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15, 4:1-20, 26-33, 9:1, 42-50, 10:13-16, 12:28-34)
- (b) The disciples (Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-14, 3:13-19, 6:7-13)
- (c) Parables (Mark 4:1-34, 12:1-12; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 15)
- (d) Other teachings (Mark 3:20-33, 7:14-23, 8:14-21, 34-38, 9:33-41, 10:17-31, 11:12-14, 20-26, 12:41-44)

V. JESUS' POWER

- (a) Healing (Mark 1:23-26, 29-42, 2:1-12, 3:1-5, 7-12, 5:1-20, 22-43, 6:5-6, 53-56, 7:24-37, 8:22-26, 9:14-29, 10:46-52)
- (b) Authority (Mark 1:21-28, 2:6-12, 11:15-19, 27-33)
- (c) Glory (Mark 9:2-8)
- (d) Power of the Creator (Mark 4:35-41, 6:30-52, 8:1-10)

VI. JESUS' PASSION

- (a) Entrance into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
- (b) The Anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:1-11)
- (c) The Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12-31)
- (d) Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)
- (e) Arrest (Mark 14:43-52)
- (f) Before the Council (Mark 14:53-65)
- (g) Peter's denial (Mark 14:66-72)
- (h) Before Pilate (Mark 15:1-15)
- (i) Crucifixion and death (Mark 15:16-41)
- (j) Burial (Mark 15:42-47)

VII. JESUS LIVES

- (a) The Resurrection (Mark 16:1-8)
- (b) Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9-11)
- (c) The disciples (Mark 16:12-18)
- (d) The Ascension (Mark 16:19-20)

VIII. THE CONTINUATION OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY THROUGH THE CHURCH

- (a) The purpose of Acts (Acts 1:1-5)
- (b) The Ascension (Acts 1:6-11)
- (c) The choice of a new apostle (Acts 1:12-26)
- (d) Pentecost - the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-24, 2:32-41)
- (e) The life-style of the Early Church (Acts 2:42-47)

Notes:

1. Many of the above references overlap. This outline is designed to assist teaching - many other outlines are possible.
2. The references given can be summarized as follows:
Exodus 12:21-42, 19:1-8, 20:1-21; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:22-28; Isaiah 11:1-9; Matthew 1:18-2:23; Mark 1-12, 14-16; Luke 1:26-56, 2, 4:1-13, 10:25-37, 15:1-32; Acts 1-2

SECTION B - PERSONAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

I. Topics

- (a) **Personal Relationships and Responsibilities**
Mutual respect and responsibility - home and family, love, sex and marriage, the care of the old.
Problems in the world of work - employer and employee.
- (b) **Stewardship**
Stewardship of life and health, money and material possessions, the environment.
- (c) **Our Attitudes to World and Social Issues**
Community service - through individuals and through organizations.
Social problems - corruption, drugs, gambling, pornography.
The mass media.
Prejudice - racial, social, religious.
The individual and the state.

II. Approaches

- (a) **Christian Perspectives**
The Bible passages listed in Annex I may be found helpful in discovering Christian perspectives on the above issues, *but the list should not be considered exhaustive*. Teachers should also feel free to consult and use non-biblical references to gain a modern perspective on these problems.
- (b) **The Individual's Perspective**
Students should be encouraged to explore their own attitudes to the problems above.

ANNEX I

INTRODUCTION

Section B deals with attitudes and behaviour in response to commonly met personal and social problems. Generally speaking the guiding principles for Christian behaviour (Christian ethics) derive from biblical teaching from both Old and New Testaments.

1. **Old Testament morality** is distinctively theological based upon the being and character of a personal God and an objective moral order which proceeds from his will (Deuteronomy 5:1-6:5)

Motives for Old Testament Morality:

- (i) love to God as a response to his love and gratitude for his care (Deuteronomy 7:7-11, 11:1-13)
 - (ii) likeness to God in holiness (Leviticus 11:44-45, 20:26) and in just impartiality (Deuteronomy 10:12-22)
 - (iii) love for one's neighbour (Leviticus 19:18) and consideration for all (Deuteronomy 10:18-20, 22:8, 24:6, 10-15)
2. **New Testament morality** presupposes the Old Testament teaching (e.g. little is said about social righteousness because it has already been dealt with by the prophets) and is also based upon the character, work and teaching of Jesus Christ)
 - (i) **the moral teaching of Jesus** is based on the Old Testament teaching (Matthew 5:17-20) expects moral likeness to God (Matthew 5:43-48) and emphasises love to God and to neighbour as the essence of all morality (Mark 12:29-31)
 - (ii) **the moral teaching of the apostles** is related to what God is and what Christ has done, (Romans 12:1-2, 13:1-5, 1 Peter 1:17-19, 2:21-23) demands moral likeness to God, (Ephesians 5:1-5; 1 Peter 1:14-16) and is motivated by the desire to please God (Colossians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3) and by the Christian's view of the future (Titus 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:13-15, 4:2-5, 2 Peter 3:10-11, 14)

TOPIC (a) PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) **Family and Marriage**
Human sexuality: Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18-25
Family life in the mind of God: Ephesians 5:21-6:4
Loyalty to the wider family of God: Luke 2:41-52
Christ's view of marriage and divorce: Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:1-12
Paul's view of marriage and divorce: 1 Corinthians 7:1-17

- (b) **Care of the Old**
 Respect old people: Leviticus 19:32
 Show appreciation of aged parents: Proverbs 23:22, 25
 The younger generation should care for the older generation: Ruth 4:13-15,
 1 Timothy 5:1-4, 8
 The church should help those who are alone: 1 Timothy 5:16
 God cares for people when they are old: Isaiah 46:3-4
- (c) **Work**
 Work as part of the Divine order: Genesis 1:26-31, 2:15, 3:17-19
 Laziness: Proverbs 6:6-11, 15:19; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12
 Work willingly: Ephesians 6:5-9
 Working with others: 1 Corinthians 12:14-27
 Work to be able to help the poor: Ephesians 4:28
 Jesus the worker: Mark 6:3; John 5:17
 Workers should be paid properly: Deuteronomy 24:14-15; Luke 10:7
 The attitude of vocation: John 4:34; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2

TOPIC (b) STEWARDSHIP

- (a) **Stewardship of Life and Health**
 Meaning and purpose of Life:
 Be God's responsible steward in His image: Genesis 1:26-28
 Be a responsible person to the world, others and self: Genesis 2:15-17, 21-24; Matthew 7:12
 Glorify God: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20
 Everlasting life in Christ: Mark 8:34-37
 Time:
 The Sabbath - its value and purpose: Exodus 20:9-11; Mark 2:27-28
 Misuse of time: Haggai 1:9
 A time for everything: Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
 Talents:
 All have different gifts: Romans 12:6-8
 Making use of our gifts: Matthew 25:14-30
 Courage to be:
 To die is man's common destiny: Psalm 90
 Seek to live rather than to die: Ecclesiastes 8:6-8; Job 42:2-5; Psalm 139:13-18
 Life is most precious: Mark 5:1-20, John 11:28-44

- (b) **Stewardship of Money and Material Possessions**
 Easy life at the expense of others: Amos 4:1-3, 6:4-7
 Dangers of wealth: Matthew 6:19-24; Mark 10:17-27; Luke 12:16-21;
 1 Timothy 6:9-10
 Money not bad in itself - it can be used wisely or foolishly: Mark 12:41-44;
 Luke 16:1-13; Acts 11:27-30
 Trust in God and not in material things: Matthew 6:19-34; 1 Timothy 6:6-8
- (c) **Stewardship of the Environment**
 Genesis 1:26-31; Leviticus 25:1-7, 26:14-20; Psalm 24:1-2

TOPIC (c) WORLD AND SOCIAL ISSUES

- (a) **Service and Responsibility**
 To those in need: Matthew 25:31-46, Luke 10:25-37; Romans 15:1-3
 Law of the Kingdom: Mark 12:29-31; James 2:14-18
 Responsibility to God and state: Matthew 22:15-22; Romans 13:1-10;
 1 Peter 2:13-17; Micah 3:1-4, 8-12; Acts 4:18-19
 Life in God's service: Romans 12:1-2
 Christian motivation for service: Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 20:24, 33-35;
 1 John 4:19-21
 The example of Jesus: Philippians 2:3-11
- (b) **Class Distinction and Racial Prejudice**
 God created human beings in his image: Genesis 5:1-2
 Pride: Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:3-4
 Warning against class distinction: James 2:1-9
 God commanded care of foreigners: Deuteronomy 10:17-19
 Peacemakers: Matthew 5:9
 Jesus mixed with all classes and races: Matthew 8:5-12, 27:57; Mark 2:13-17, 10:46-52; Luke 8:1-3, 17:11-19; John 3:1-2
 The Kingdom is for people of all nations: Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 14:16-24; Romans 3:29-30; Galatians 3:26-29
 True greatness: Mark 10:35-37, 41-45
- (c) **Social Problems**
 Corruption:
 God requires justice and sincerity: Deuteronomy 10:15-20; Psalm 15
 A corrupt society: Amos 5:10-15; Micah 3:8-12, 7:1-7
 Drugs:
 Surrender to God, not to selfish desires: Romans 6:12-14
 The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
 Discipline the body: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 Be self-controlled and alert: 1 Peter 4:7
 Do not be a slave of destructive habits: 2 Peter 2:19
 Gambling:
 Work is ordered by God for satisfaction and enjoyment: Genesis 2:15, 3:19;
 Ecclesiastes 3:13

Greed and selfishness are condemned by Scripture: Exodus 20:17; Ephesians 5:5

Gambling is based on weaknesses in human nature therefore it is unacceptable in a Christian way of life: Romans 15:1-2; 1 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Timothy 6:8-10; John 15:12

Trust in God, not in luck: Matthew 6:31-33, 16:26, 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Pornography:

Human beings deserve respect: Genesis 1:27

Avoid lust: Matthew 5:27-30; Mark 7:21-23; Colossians 3:5-10

Fill your mind with what is good: Philippians 4:8-9

Wrong use of Sex

Matthew 5:27-30; John 8:1-11; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Ephesians 5:1-5

(d) **The Mass Media**

Importance of the mass media:

Speaking the truth: Matthew 5:37, 6:33

Justice for all: Amos 5:23-24; Isaiah 1:17

Responsibility of the mass media:

Do not tell lies: Leviticus 19:11

Freedom lives in responsibility: Luke 17:1-2; Mark 2:27;

1 Corinthians 8:9, 10:23-24

Be a humble servant of the community: Matthew 20:26-28

ANNEX II

Instructions concerning the use of books in the “open-book” examination:

1. Candidates should bring into the examination centre a copy of one of the approved versions of the whole Bible. The approved versions are listed below in paragraph 7.
2. Candidates, who wish to do so, may bring in two Bibles (or New Testaments) in order to have different language versions or translations.
3. The use of textbooks, commentaries or other reference books will not be permitted during the examination.
4. Apart from the particulars of the owner (e.g. name, class, address), the books used must not have been written in, although candidates may underline the text. They may also write down letters of the alphabet and the names of the books in the Bible. Infringements of these regulations normally incur penalties or disqualification.
5. Candidates are also permitted to mark pages with symbols, paper tags or coloured paper clips but pages should not be clipped together.

6. During the examination, invigilators may examine all copies of the Bible which candidates have brought into the centre. If any unauthorized material is found candidates will be allowed to continue but once the examination is over, the books concerned will have to be handed to the centre supervisor for inspection. It will later be decided whether the regulations have been broken and whether the candidate should be disqualified or suffer some other penalty.
7. The approved versions of the Bible are as follows:
 - Good News Bible/Today's English Version/Good News for Modern Man (N.T.)/Good News Bible (illustrated)
 - Good News Bible with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha
 - Sunrise Good News Bible
 - Revised Standard Version
 - New Revised Standard Version
 - The Jerusalem Bible
 - The New Jerusalem Bible
 - The Knox Version
 - New American Standard Version
 - New International Version
 - Gideons International bilingual edition of the New Testament (Kuoyu and Revised Version)
 - 現代中文譯本／給現代學生的佳音／給現代人的福音（新約）／現代人的希望／現代中文譯本修訂版
 - 聖經（思高聖經學會譯釋）
 - 新約全書（思高聖經學會譯釋）
 - 新舊約全書（和合版）
 - 中文聖經新譯本（樂可門基金）／聖經新譯本——學生版（環球聖經公會）
 - 聖經（新標點和合本）

Notes:

1. Booklets containing individual books from the Bible in the versions mentioned above are acceptable, as are bilingual combinations of these versions.

If schools wish to use versions that are not listed, they should write to seek permission from:

The Secretary General
(Attention: HSE)
Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
Southorn Centre, 12/F
130 Hennessy Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong

before 1st December in the year preceding the examination. Private candidates may also seek such permission, and should do so in writing by the same date.

2.
 - * The underlying rationale for the inclusion of Bible versions in the approved list is that they are in common use in Hong Kong schools.
 - * The use of unapproved versions will incur mark penalties.
 - * The use of versions which are study Bibles, or which contain unauthorised material such as commentaries or handwritten study notes will lead to disqualification from the subject.