

**Religion & Homosexuality**

[*Christianity and homosexuality*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_and_homosexuality)

[Christian denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denominations) have a variety of views on [homosexual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexual)ity, ranging from outright condemnation to complete acceptance.

Most [Christian denominations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denominations) welcome people attracted to the same sex, but teach that homosexual acts are [sinful](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinful). These denominations include the [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), and [Mormons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints), also take the position that homosexual sexual activity is sinful.

[Liberal Christians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberal_Christianity) are supportive of homosexuals. In particular, the [Metropolitan Community Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_Community_Church), a denomination of 40,000 members, was founded specifically to serve the Christian LGBT community.

*‘If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; (Leviticus 18:22).*

Passages from the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) (Bible) have been interpreted to mean that anyone engaging in homosexual practices should be punished with death.

*‘…a man leaves his mother and father and is united to his wife and they become one flesh’. (Genesis 2:24).*

Conservative Christians generally oppose same-sex relations based on the Bible texts that describe human sexual relations as strictly [heterosexual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterosexual) by God's design. As such, it is argued that sexual desires and actions that contradict God's design are deemed sinful and are condemned by God.

**Natural law** is the idea that certain rights or values are correct because of [human nature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_nature) and understandable through human reason. Natural law refers to the use of reason to decide personal human nature to deduce binding rules of moral behaviour. E.g. it is natural for a man and a woman to have sex to have children to populate the earth. Homosexual sex cannot do this therefore it is unnatural.

The Catholic view is also founded on a [natural law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_law) argument and they interpret some Biblical passages to be commandments to be heterosexually married.

Things to do.

1. Explain what Catholics and Mormons say about gay people and gay sex.
2. Explain, using a quotation why conservative Christians are against homosexuality.
3. Explain why Catholics say marriage and sexual relations should only take place between a man and a woman.

**Catholic Church.**

The [Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church) teaches that anyone who is not married should not have sex. This includes gay people, as the Catholic Church does not accept gay marriage this suggests gay people should never have sex. Marriage should only be between a man and a woman. Homosexuality is not natural as male and female sex organs complement each other and cannot produce children. The Bible teaches that men and women should; *‘be fruitful and increase in number’,* (Genesis 1:28).



**Quakers.**

Quakers are a Christian group famous for their peaceful and inclusive outlook. They say it is not the gender and sexual orientation of a person that matters; it is the depth of feeling they have for each other…

"Where there is a genuine tenderness, an openness to responsibility, and the seed of commitment, God is surely not shut out. Can we not say that God can enter any relationship in which there is a measure of selfless love?"

**How can two different Christian groups have opposing views about homosexuality?**

The Bible makes very few mentions of homosexuality - lesbianism isn't mentioned at all in the Old Testament - interpretations of the verses that do exist differ hugely.

Jesus himself says nothing directly about homosexuality. There are though statements by him which have been interpreted as having a bearing on the subject.

**"A man shall leave his father and mother, and be made one with his wife; and the two shall become one flesh."**

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| **ANTI-GAY**This indicates Jesus saw heterosexual relations as the proper way of behaving. | http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/shared/img/o.gif |  **PRO-GAY** Jesus is actually talking about the sanctity  of heterosexual marriage |

Part of the reason the views diverge so much is because Christians think of the Bible differently. Some see it as literally the word of God, divine inspiration which humans should not question. Others see it rather as a book which is a witness to God's message, but one which was written by humans and thus has flaws.



Things to do.

1. Using a quotation, explain why Catholics say marriage should be between a man and a woman.
2. Explain, using a quotation what Quakers think about homosexual love.
3. Note down Jesus’ quotation about marriage. Explain how this can be interpreted in different ways.

**Buddhism**

Buddhists follow the [Five Precepts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Five_Precepts) the third of which is "To refrain from sexual misconduct." However, "sexual misconduct" is a broad term, and can be interpreted in different ways. Buddhism does not clearly define sexuality rules for [lay followers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laity). Therefore, the morality of [homosexuality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homosexuality) is not considered a religious matter by many Buddhists. The Dalai Lama supports human rights for all, "regardless of sexual orientation.

Most of Mahayana Buddhist teachings assert that all beings who correctly practice the dharma may reach enlightenment, since all possess an innate Buddha nature.

Buddhism has a great variety of different denominations, including many liberal streams of Buddhism, which are accepting of all sexual orientations.

Things to do.

1. Referring to the Five Precepts explain Buddhist attitudes to sex and homosexuality.

Exam question.

‘Homosexuality is always wrong.’ Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you:

• should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement

• should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view

• should refer to religious arguments

• may refer to non-religious arguments

• should reach a justified conclusion. *(12 marks: 5 SPaG marks)*

*Use the following to start your paragraphs;*

Some Christians would agree with this statement because… … … (explain using a quotation and an example)… … …

Other Christians such as Q\_\_\_\_\_ would disagree with the statement because … … … (explain using a quotation)… … …

Buddhists would disagree with the statement because … … …(explain a reason)

My view is that the statement is … (right/wrong) because… … … (give reasons, referring to modern attitudes)… …



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In your answer you:

• should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement

• should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view

• should refer to religious arguments

• may refer to non-religious arguments

• should reach a justified conclusion. *(12 marks: 5 SPaG marks)*

*Use the following to start your paragraphs;*

Some Christians would agree with this statement because… … … (use Leviticus 18:22 + explain)… … …

Also in the Bible it says… … … (use Genesis 1:28 + link to the idea of natural law). This means that sex should be … … …

Homosexual sex is wrong because it cannot… … …

Other Christians such as Q\_\_\_\_\_ would disagree with the statement because … … … (explain using a quotation)… … …

Buddhists would also disagree with the statement because … … …(use 3rd precept and explain…)

The Dalai Lama said “My religion on kindness”, it is not kind to … … … (link to homophobia and discrimination)

My view is that the statement is … (right/wrong) because… … … (give reasons, referring to modern attitudes e.g. the law allows gay marriage)… …

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Explain two religious beliefs about the status of women in religion. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. *(5 marks)*

In some Christian Churches such as the Salvation Army, women … …

The Church of England allows women to … …

However the Bible says (1 Corinthians 14:34)… …

Jesus also had no … …

Therefore in the Catholic Church women … … …

