6.10 Catholic and Protestant Christian Attitudes to Abortion: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 State one example of a situation in which some Protestant churches might permit abortion, naming the situation and the denomination or tradition in context.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Give two ethical approaches a liberal Protestant might use to justify allowing abortion in limited cases, naming the approach.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Give three features of Catholic pastoral practice that aim to support women facing an unplanned pregnancy, context: Church response rather than legal position.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Explain two reasons why some Christians who oppose abortion nevertheless support legal exceptions to protect the mother, context: denominational and pastoral tensions.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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5 Explain two Catholic reasons for opposing abortion, in the context of Roman Catholic teaching on life and moral law.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Explain two contrasting Christian attitudes to abortion, one Catholic and one liberal Protestant, and refer to a source of wisdom or authority in your answer. Context: denominational differences.

(Total for Question 6 is 5 marks)

7 Evaluate the statement, 'Christians should always oppose abortion.' In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, and reach a justified conclusion. Context: denominational differences within Christianity.

(Total for Question 7 is 12 marks)

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Mark scheme · 6.10 Catholic and Protestant Christian Attitudes to Abortion: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

one correct example, e.g. some Methodist or Quaker churches permit abortion if the mothers life is at risk, oe **B1**

Answer: Some Methodist or Quaker churches permit abortion if the mother's life is at risk.

Question 2

one approach named, e.g. situation ethics (the most loving outcome), oe **B1**

second approach named, e.g. conscience-based reasoning or proportionalism, oe **B1**

Answer: Examples: situation ethics; conscience-based reasoning or proportionalism.

Question 3

one feature, e.g. counselling and pastoral care offered by parishes or Catholic agencies, oe **B1**

one feature, e.g. practical support such as housing or financial help through charities, oe **B1**

one feature, e.g. encouragement of adoption as an alternative to abortion, oe **B1**

Answer: Any three such as counselling; practical support from charities; encouragement of adoption.

Question 4

point 1: protecting the life of the mother can be seen as choosing the lesser evil in tragic circumstances, oe **B1**

development: pastoral concern for the mother and other children may justify exception even where life of the foetus is valued, oe **B1**

point 2: legal exceptions may reflect respect for conscience and plural society, reducing harm while upholding core teachings, oe **B1**

development: this allows clergy and churches to provide support without forcing one legal stance on everyone, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. lesser evil to save the mother and pastoral concern; legal exceptions respect conscience and reduce societal harm while allowing churches to maintain teachings.

Question 5

point 1: life is sacred from conception, based on the sanctity of life principle, oe **B1**

development: therefore abortion is seen as taking an innocent human life which is always wrong, oe **B1**

point 2: natural law and teaching in Humanae Vitae and other documents stress absolute moral rules, oe **B1**

development: following natural law, abortion is intrinsically wrong even if intentions are good, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. sanctity of life from conception means abortion kills an innocent life; natural law and Humanae Vitae teach absolute moral rules so abortion is intrinsically wrong.

Question 6

Catholic view: abortion is always wrong because life is sacred from conception, oe **B1**

development for Catholic view: appeal to natural law and teaching such as Humanae Vitae supporting absolute protection of life, oe **B1**

liberal Protestant view: may permit abortion in limited circumstances, such as to protect the life or health of the mother, or in cases of rape or severe foetal abnormality, oe **B1**

development for Protestant view: justification using situation ethics or conscience, and appeal to scriptural care for the vulnerable, oe **B1**

explicit reference to a source of wisdom or authority, e.g. Exodus 20:13 or Jeremiah 1:5 used appropriately, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. Catholic: always oppose abortion, based on sanctity of life and Humanae Vitae; liberal Protestant: allow in limited cases, using situation ethics or conscience, refer to Exodus 20:13 or Jeremiah 1:5 as part of the discussion.

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Question 7

Level 1 Simple statements for or against the view with little or no development, limited reference to Christian teachings, or a one sided response.	**1-3**
Level 2 An attempt to argue both for and against the statement with some supporting religious reasons and simple use of scripture or teaching, evaluation is limited.	**4-6**
Level 3 Clear arguments both for and against the statement, using religious teachings, denominational differences and scripture, with some judgement shown and a qualified conclusion.	**7-9**
Level 4 A balanced, well-developed evaluation that considers Catholic and Protestant positions, uses scripture and theological reasoning accurately, weighs strengths and weaknesses and reaches a well-justified conclusion.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Arguments supporting the statement: Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life, natural law and Humanae Vitae, belief that life begins at conception so abortion is murder, Exodus 20:13 cited as authoritative.
- Arguments supporting the statement: some Christians argue Jesus taught the value of every human life and compassion should not permit killing of the unborn, appeal to Jeremiah 1:5 about being known in the womb.
- Arguments opposing the statement: liberal Protestant approaches use situation ethics to argue the most loving action may sometimes permit abortion, for example to save the life of the mother or in cases of rape or severe foetal abnormality.
- Arguments opposing the statement: appeal to the role of conscience and pastoral care, allowing legal exceptions to protect women, and the view that scripture does not give an unequivocal prohibition of early abortion.
- Consideration of denominational practice: Catholic Churches maintain an almost absolute prohibition, while some Protestant denominations, including Quaker and some Methodist communities, permit limited abortion, reflecting different theological emphases.
- Evaluation of scripture and authority: discussion of how Exodus 20:13 is interpreted, whether Jeremiah 1:5 implies personhood from conception, and how church teachings or conscience are applied.
- Practical and pastoral considerations: weighing the needs and suffering of women, consequences of illegal abortion, and the role of support services and prevention.
- Conclude with a justified position that recognises the strength of the Catholic absolute prohibition and equally the moral force of situation-based Protestant arguments, giving a considered judgement about whether an absolute rule is appropriate across all circumstances.

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