Theme A: Relationships and families

01.3 Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about unmarried couples living together (cohabitation).

In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions. [4 marks]

SAMPLE 1

Catholics believe that “every sexual act should take place in the framework of marriage”. This is taken from the Human Vitae and living together means you may have had sex before or be tempted to have sex before marriage. This would be a sin.

Some Christians believe it is good to live together before marriage so you can get to know your partner properly before marriage, so if you know your partner properly before marriage it is not likely you will fight or divorce. This could affect children that the couple may have later.

SAMPLE 2

One religious belief about cohabitation is that it is acceptable as long as the couple are not having sex before they are married. Sex before marriage is something that most religions are against as you have not yet made a formal commitment to each other and God.

Another religious belief is all couples are expected to eventually have children and create a family to raise. If a couple move in together because they love each other they are still creating a stable environment to raise children in their faith.

SAMPLE 3

Generally Christians believe that it is wrong because they believe every human was created in the image of God and therefore they are equals. If they want to cohabit they are no better or worse than others. Other believe that you should be married before you move in together because then you are united in the eyes of God.

SAMPLE 4

Cohabitation is strictly forbidden in Islam. This is because marriage should be taken seriously and living with someone before you are married is seen as being unfaithful to God. Non-Religious people may argue that cohabitation allows people to have a stronger relationship.

SAMPLE 5

Christians believe that marriage is the first step for any relationship and so they believe that you should be married before you live together. “marriage is a sacrament” so Christians need to marry prior to living together.

Other Christians believe that cohabitation is an important step as this is time when you get to know each other and you can work out if you are compatible. This may mean that when the couple do get married they are less likely to divorce as they know more about each other.
SAMPLE 6

It is said that “sexual acts must only take place within the framework of marriage” therefore unmarried couples living together should never have sex until they are married. However, in the garden of Eden God created Eve for Adam so that he was not lonely. Therefore some Christians believe that cohabitation is acceptable as God did not want his creation to be lonely.

SAMPLE 7

Catholics disagree with cohabitation this is because as they are not married they should not be having sexual intercourse. Muslims agree with cohabitation because it gives them a chance to see what living together is like before they marry so that they then don’t later divorce.

SAMPLE 8

A religious belief about cohabitation is that the Christian church is becoming more lenient towards it. This is because weddings are expensive and some people cannot afford them. They can still live together and follow God’s rules by resisting sex before marriage.

On the other hand the archbishop of York stated that you should “test the milk before you buy the cow”.
01.4 Explain two religious beliefs about the purpose of families.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer. [5 marks]

SAMPLE 1

Sikhs believe that it is important to be a family to help spread religion and love. Some Sikhs believe that through the relationship of both parents and children there should be equality. It is the parents job to teach their children about equality and bring them up to be fair and informed Sikhs.

In Christianity, the purpose of families is to expand the Christian community and fulfil God’s plan to procreate and “go forth and multiply”. Parents should be a role model for their children and treat them with love and kindness. There should be respect between parents and children and take their children to Sunday school.

SAMPLE 2

To Christians, the purpose of families may be to raise them believing in the religion and in God. This then fulfils their goal to be “fishers of men” and spread the religion through evangelism. However some Christians may believe that the purpose of families is to carry out the work of God and create new life that will grow up in the church.

SAMPLE 3

Christians believe that the role of the family is to support and guide children. This is because parents are role models to their children, and they should be respected and show respect to their children. The Bible tells “obey your parents”.

Muslims believe that the role of a family is to teach and share their faith. Muslim parents have a duty to expose their children to Islam and take them to madrassa. This is night school. There they can learn Arabic and what it is to be a Muslim.
sample 1

As time has passed, homosexuality has become less of a taboo subject and is widely accepted in today's society. However, many religions are against it.

For Christians, Roman Catholics, they won't accept homosexual marriages because it goes against the Bible saying “a man should not lie with a man”. Therefore, they would stick to their beliefs and faith and not worry about or think it was wrong to discriminate. Other Christians are understanding of changing times, even though they disapprove they would not want homosexuals to be persecuted.

However, some people agree with the statement as they believe everyone is loved by God and therefore everyone should love each other. By following Jesus’ example, they would understand that they need to be kind to everyone. Jesus spoke with and healed people that were usually cast aside. This included the much-hated tax collectors. God created us all therefore he must have planned for people to be homosexual. Also, Jesus preached love “above all else” and to “love your neighbour”.

sample 2

Some people may agree with the statement because we should let people express their sexuality with no judgement. We should accept people for who they are as long as they are not hurting others. A religious teaching to support this “do not bare false witness”. This is from the 10 commandments. If we didn't approve of homosexual relationships, we may cause people to lie about their sexuality or who they love so that they avoid being judged. If we let them express their sexuality and accept it then they would not fear and therefore lie. However, we could also say that those who don’t agree with it but who lie to pretend they do accept it are then having to lie.

Some people may disagree with the statement because when God first created humans, he instructed them to “be fruitful and multiply”. This implies that humans were created to reproduce. Homosexual relationships are unable to reproduce this could suggest that they should not be in a relationship as they cannot fulfil the purpose of having children. However, you could argue that the world has enough heterosexual couples to reproduce and inhabit the nation so there is no need for homosexual couples to reproduce. Some couples are infertile, and others do not want to have children. In this way they are in a similar situation to homosexual couples.

Some people may agree with this statement because being a homosexual is not a choice. You cannot choose to have feelings for someone as the same sex as you so why should others have the right to disprove of homosexual relationships. In many ways this is the same as disrespecting a race or religion. Jesus taught that Christians should “love your neighbour” as all humans are neighbours as they have been created by God. You should therefore treat everyone equally irrelevant of their sexual choices – as long as they are not causing anyone harm. Some people my point to the quote “do not lie with a man as you do with a woman”. Some people now believe that this is a mistranslation and it should read “do not lie with a boy”. This could mean that the Bible was warning people against having relationships with children and not as people of the same gender.

In conclusion I believe that it is wrong to disapprove of homosexual relationships because they literally are doing nothing to hurt anyone. It is something you cannot change. Society frowns upon racism and this, I believe, is a similar issue.

sample 3

Many Catholics would say that homosexual relationships are wrong as God intended on us living as heterosexuals. Genesis recounts God telling Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply” meaning the main
purpose of a relationship is reproduction, homosexuals can’t reproduce naturally so they are going against God’s will and plan. Another teaching is that “you should not lie with a man as you do with a woman”. This again suggests that God will not condone homosexual relationships so people should not either.

Other christens believe it is wrong to judge and discriminate as Jesus taught that you should “treat people as you wish to be treated”. It is obvious no-one would choose to be discriminated against so they would not do this to others. God is both all knowing and the creator and therefore every creature is part of his design. If you disapprove the design, then you are in turn disapproving God and this could suggest that you know better than God or you wish to undermine him.

I think it is wrong for people to judge others as not being loving is judging others unnecessarily. As long as both people in any relationship are happy and love the other there should not be any issues.

SAMPLE 4

Some Christians may disagree with the statement and argue that in the Bible God clearly disagrees with homosexuality; he forbids it! The Bible, word of God, describes it as ‘detestable’ this shows that it is not only unnatural but disapproved of. The purpose of a relationship is to procreate which homosexuals cannot do. Some Muslims also highlight that same sex relationships aren’t good role models for their children as children need both a father and a mother. Islam teaches “must you lust after males and abandon the wives God created for you?” showing that homosexuality is a grave sin. Religious people should have a strong relationship and then they can have children and bring them up with the faith. If they are homosexual, they cannot do this as they cannot have children.

On the other hand, people should “love their neighbour” and not judge other people for things that they cannot control. Recently the Church of England have allowed homosexual couples to marry. Other Christians would say that having homosexual feelings in itself is not a problem but if you are tempted and act on them then you are committing a sin. Some religious homosexuals will join the church or become chaste so that they are showing God despite the temptation they love him more. This suggests that acting on homosexual feelings is a choice and people can be judged for their choices by God and other people.

Overall, I believe that although Jesus taught his disciples to love and be accepting it is clear that people should discriminate against homosexuals as God made it clear that homosexual relationships are forbidden.

SAMPLE 5

Some Christians may agree with the statement as the Bible teaches that you should treat everyone how you want to be treated. This means accepting homosexual relationships even if they don’t agree with it. This is because no-one wants to be disapproved of because of who they love. Therefore, you should treat homosexuals with the respect you expect yourself.

Another reason some Christians may agree with the statement is because they believe that everyone was created by God and in his image. As long as you are not harming others then you should not disapprove of homosexual relationships as they are part of God’s creation as well as an equal to you.

A reason a Christian may disagree with the statement is because the Bible teaches that you should not lie with a man like he does with a woman. If it is in the Bible, it is a holy and right and the correct guidance so it should be followed exactly. It is therefore ok to disapprove of them.

Someone may disagree as a homosexual relationship is unnatural. Biologically only people of opposite genders can procreate, and homosexuality is going against this.

In conclusion I agree because they are not doing any harm to anyone else and they are showing love to other people. Yes, they are no procreating but the world is overpopulated as it is and actually homosexual couples could instead adopt and share their love with children in need.
A strict opinion is that there is no place for homosexual couples in the future of the faith. Homosexuality is a sin and all intercourse should be between a man and woman. The Bible does not agree with intercourse that cannot result in a child. Homosexual sex is both unnatural and unproductive.

Others may say that God created homosexuals and they have those desires because that is what he wanted them to have. If God made us to hate those people, then that does not seem fair as they cannot help feeling how they feel.

A non-religious person may accept homosexuality as they are using their freedom of choice to live their lives. Freedom is an important human right.

Other non-religious people could argue that homosexual couples do not fulfil traditional gender roles, and this does not fit the norm.

I think people should be allowed to embrace their sexuality and not be told what to do or feel threatened by others.

Some people may believe that homosexual relationships are wrong as they are a sin. Despite this everyone should be treated the same. This could extend to prison. In some country’s homosexuality is illegal just as other crimes are. Therefore, they should be in prison just as other criminals should be.

Others believe that as long as both people in the couple are happy then they should be able to be together. Adam and Eve prove that homosexual couples are wrong as God made a man and a woman to love each other not Adam and Adam. A relationship is meant to start a family and homosexual couples cannot do this.

Even though this is true the church is accepting of some homosexual relationships. This shows they are willing to update their beliefs. If the church can do this then others should do that as well. In this country it is not illegal to be in a homosexual couple or get married to someone of the same gender as you.

It is difficult for people to change their views but it is not illegal so it should be ok.

In Christianity, homosexuality is looked at from two different viewpoints. The modern Christian would protest about homosexuality as they believe that everyone should be equal as they too were made by God and they should be treated fairly.

More traditional Christians could argue that homosexuals are wrong and people should not agree with them. This is because they cannot reproduce. In Islam homosexuality is punishable.

Non-religious people seem to be more tolerant and homosexuality is seen as normal. Some people agree and some people do not agree.

On one hand a Christian would disagree as the church hasn’t supported homosexual relationships until very recently. This is because Adam and Eve confirmed the idea that men and women should be together as they can get married and have a family. Secondly, they consider homosexuals as sinful as they are going against what it says in the Bible.

Other people might say that God would not judge people for something so silly and they shouldn’t either. I am an atheist but if I believed that God made people then why would he make some people who are born to sin? Everyone should be able to do what they want.
SAMPLE 10

Homosexual relationships are becoming more acceptable in society. In the UK in 2005 civil partnerships became legal and this then changed again to incorporate same-sex “gay” marriages in 2014.

Many Christians believe if God created and wanted homosexuals to be together then he would have made a way for them to be able to conceive a child naturally. However, in modern society homosexuals can still have a family through adoption, fostering and through surrogacy so it is even possible for them to have a child biologically. This then makes the fact they can’t have children naturally irrelevant. If homosexual couples can respectfully and morally bring up children, even as Christians, who love and accept others why can’t Christians accept them?

For centuries, homosexuals have been persecuted and discriminated against which goes against the Christian belief of “love your neighbour” and “treat others as you wish to be treated” even “you are all one in Jesus Christ”. Jesus treated everyone equally and therefore he would want his followers to do the same.

Scientifically it has been proven that sexuality is not a choice and if you are attracted to someone as the same gender as you it is not because you have made this choice to do so. This contradicts the idea that it is ok to disapprove of their ‘choices’ as people cannot simply change.

Overall I disagree as you surely cannot disapprove a relationship that is equal to any other. Homosexuals can love each other, bring happiness into the lives of others, have and care for children and get married. It is not illegal!

SAMPLE 11

A homosexual relationship is a loving relationship between two people of the same gender which opposes the traditional religious teachings of heterosexual unions. Many Christians and Muslims are against same-sex relationships as in the Qur’an it states “must you lust after men and abandon wives that God has created for you”. This suggests that homosexuals are disrespecting God as people are neglecting the relationships that God had created for them. In Christianity it states that lying with a man as you would with a woman is “detestable”. This is seen in practice as homosexual relationships are viewed as forbidden in the catholic community. This is also because they are defying God as homosexual sex does not have the ability to naturally produce children. This means they cannot “increase in number”.

Others would say that God is omnibenevolent and surely he would allow homosexual relationships as this is the most loving thing to do. Asking homosexuals to deny their feelings would be unfair as God created them in his image. If he had not wanted homosexuals to exist he would not have created them. In the garden of Eden God made Eve to allow Adam to not be lonely. By giving Adam a companion he showed that he did not want people to be alone but instead in love. Some religious people, whilst they would not support a homosexual relationship, would not actively disapprove of them. This means that you can disagree with them without making your feelings known or hurting others.

To conclude, although the Qur’an describes homosexual relationships as “exceeding all bounds” and the Bible “detestable” I believe that if we are truly all “one in Christ” then no-one should be denied their nature or to be allowed to act on their feelings to be happy.

SAMPLE 12

Humanists would disagree with disapproving of homosexual relationships. This is because they generally follow the principle of utilitarianism. This means that an action is good or acceptable if it benefits and promotes happiness to the majority of people. By denying a homosexual relationship you are denying people the chance to be happy. The only exception would be if an existing relationship (possibly heterosexual) was destroyed and or people lied to be in a homosexual relationship.
Some religious people might agree because we are humans and we have no right to judge others as “only God can judge”. In the Bible it says that “he who without sin may cast the first stone”. We are in no position to judge others. If you “love your neighbour” then you should want people to be happy if they are with someone they love.

Some people might disagree as if no-one speaks up then homosexuals will end up suffering. Christians believe that “if a man lies with a man as he does with a woman” then it is an “abomination”. If this is treated as the truth then it is clear in the afterlife homosexuals will be punished. Christians need to disapprove to show them they are wrong. In this way they are educating others and sharing the Bible with them. In Islam these relationships are also forbidden. Muslims would also not want to offend God so need to be told acting on these feelings is wrong.