

RE, Philosophy and Ethics (RPE) –

Absent student work for Year 9

Please read each information sheet and complete the questions following the information sheet. You are not required to print this work. Please summarise the knowledge, write the questions on paper and respond on paper.

Topics below include:

- Adultery
- Divorce, separation and remarriage

Adultery



Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not their spouse

Extra marital sex (or adultery) is generally frowned upon in Britain. The majority of people in UK disapprove of adultery on moral and social grounds and the law recognises adultery as a justifiable reason for the granting of a divorce.

Christian Attitudes to Adultery

Christianity considers adultery as a sin. The Ten Commandments forbid adultery: "do not commit adultery."

Christianity teaches that adultery is wrong for the following reasons:

- Marriage is sexually exclusive and should not be shared with anyone else
- The Ten Commandments forbid adultery: "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14)
- Marriage is a sacrament – a gift from God – and adultery goes against this
- Committing adultery destroys the special relationships between a husband and wife
- Committing adultery can harm the family unit and cause the partner to feel cheated and betrayed

Why do some marriages fail?

- Lack of communication
- Lack of appreciation
- Unemployment
- Alcohol/drug problems
- Financial problems
- Affairs (adultery)
- Sexual problems
- Religious differences
- Unacceptable behaviour
- Interference from in-laws
- Too little time together
- Pregnancy/children
- Separation
- False hopes
- Work or career
- Different interests
- Personality difficulties



When people argues or are in **conflict**, making up is essential and is known as '**reconciliation**'. Religious communities can help those who are having relationship problems to reconcile. The religious leader might offer **counselling and guidance** to the couple, or the wider community might offer support and prayers.

However, sometimes the couple cannot reconcile, in which case, they might want to end the relationships. This could involve:

- **Divorce** – the legal ending of a marriage
- **Separation** = deciding to live separately
- **Annulment** – a legal way of cancelling a marriage in the Catholic Church

Eventually, a person who has been married and divorced, might want to marry someone else. This is known as **remarriage**.

Adultery: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'adultery'?

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2. Why do the majority of people in Britain object to adultery?

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3. What does the law recognise adultery as?

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4. What do the Ten Commandments say about adultery?

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5. Why is adultery wrong for Christians? (name three reasons)

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6. Why do some marriages fail? (Name three reasons)

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7. What is reconciliation?

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8. How might a religious community help couples who are in conflict?

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9. What three options do a couple who cannot reconcile have?

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10. What is remarriage?

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Divorce, Separation and Remarriage



Divorce: To legally end a marriage

Marriages break down, which can result in separation or divorce. The RC Church does not permit divorce, so some Catholics will choose to remain separated rather than to divorce. However, divorce is necessary if someone wants to marry someone else. Otherwise it is known as **bigamy** and it is illegal.



Bigamy is entering into a marriage with someone whilst still being legally married to another person. Couples can apply for a divorce via the court system.

Christian Attitudes to Divorce and Separation

Roman Catholic

- Do not recognise divorce
- Marriage is a lifelong commitment that cannot be broken
- In some cases, annulment is given, which is where the marriage is declared as having never happened
- Jesus said, "*Anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.*"
- The Bible says, "*Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.*"
- Catholics who separate are expected not to cohabit with anyone else and if they do this, then they are not allowed to receive Holy Communion during Mass
- Catholics who do divorce can apply through the courts, just like everyone else. However, the Catholic Church do not recognise couples who are legally divorced. They believe that, in God's eyes, you are still married
- Annulment is when a court says that your marriage is not legally valid. This might be in the case that there is no consummation of the marriage (the couple haven't had sex) or when it is proved that the marriage should never have taken place, e.g. because it was forced



Church of England

- Divorce is recognised by the Church of England as it is **legal** (allowed by the law)
- Issues arise when it comes to remarriage. Remarriage is okay if the minister allows it – but it is up to their own discretion

Is divorce acceptable?

Maybe

No

It is not God's intention

It is breaking the solemn promises made before God and the Christian family

Anglicans/Church of England

Divorce is best avoided. However UK law accepts divorce, therefore it is OK in some circumstances, e.g. abuse

Remarriage is discouraged but if chosen then a non-church wedding is preferred

Remarriage permitted if it seems suitable and acceptable to all concerned

No minister can be forced to conduct a remarriage service against their will

Catholics do not recognise divorce

Marriage is a sacrament and it cannot be dissolved (unless for special reasons, e.g. it was a forced marriage)

Some marriages can be annulled for special reasons, e.g. the marriage has not been consummated

If a Catholic remarries without annulments then they can attend Mass but cannot receive Holy Communion (bread and wine)

Divorce, Separation and Remarriage: Questions

1. What is the meaning of 'divorce'?

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2. What is bigamy?

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3. What is an annulment?

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4. What did Jesus say about divorce and adultery?

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5. What does the Bible say about separation?

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6. What might happen to Roman Catholics who divorce, but live (cohabit) with another partner?

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7. Why do Roman Catholics not recognise a couple who are legally divorced?

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8. Why might a marriage get annulled?

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9. Why does the Church of England allow divorce?

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10. When might remarriage be allowed?

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