

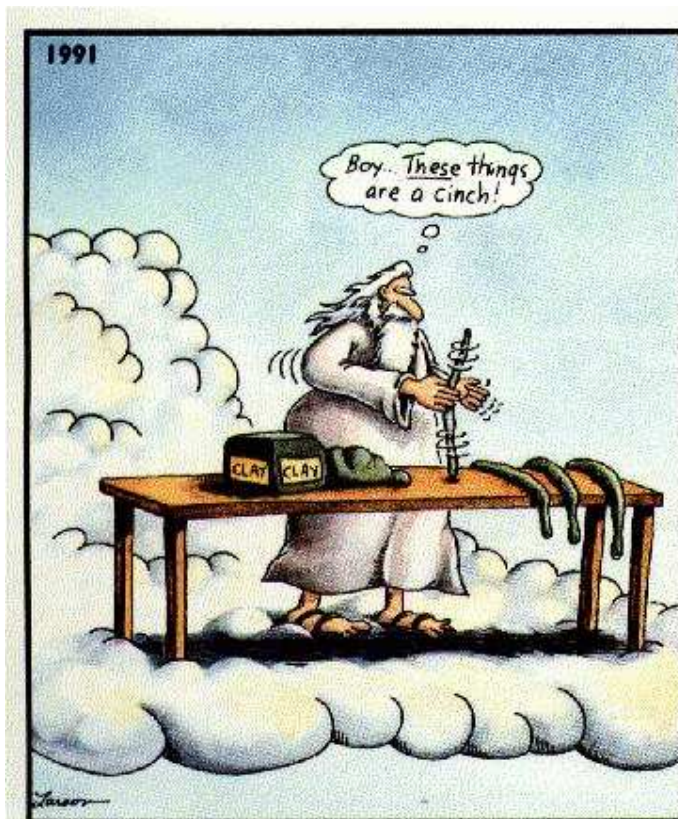
Name:

Class:

**OCR GCSE Religious Studies B
Philosophy and Applied Ethics Revision
Book
J121 (Short Course)
J621 (Full Course)**

Philosophy 1 Module B601

Beliefs about deity



God makes the snake

In this topic you have studied:

- What Christians believe about the nature of God (in other words: his qualities; his role; what God is like)
- The reasons Christians give in support of their belief in God (in other words: why they believe)
- What Christians believe about Jesus and the Holy Spirit
- Belief in God intervening in the world through miracles and in the person of Christ and through the Holy Spirit

DICTIONARY

ATHEIST	This is someone who does not believe in God
AUTHORITY	This is the power or right to give orders or make decisions
MIRACLES	These are unique events which defy the laws the nature (how the world works) e.g. someone coming alive again after being dead
OMNI-BENEVOLENT	This means God is all loving – he shows this love through his miracles and the fact he came down as Jesus to open the door to heaven
OMNISCIENT	This means God is all knowing – he knows what people have done, are doing and will do
OMNIPOTENT	This means God is all powerful
REVELATION	This refers to the way in which God has revealed himself/made himself and his wishes known to everyone
SACRED TEXTS/SCRIPTURES	A special writing/book which contains eternal (everlasting) truths about a religion
SECULAR	This refers to a non-religious view
THEIST	This is someone who believes in a personal God
TRANSCENDENT	This means that God is beyond this world; he is beyond human understanding
TRINITY	This refers to the different roles of God: God the Father (Creator); God the Son (Saviour) and God the Holy Spirit (the power of God).

Beliefs about deity

<p>Descriptions of God (the nature of God)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All powerful (omnipotent) because he created the world (Genesis) • All loving – God sent Jesus to die on the cross so man’s sins could be forgiven • Judge – God (Jesus) will judge everyone on Judgement Day (teachings in parable of Sheep and Goats) • Eternal – God has no beginning and no end • All-knowing (omniscient) God knows everything, which has happened, is happening and will happen. • Trinity – God the Father (Creator of and sustainer of [looks after] the earth); God the Son: Jesus/Redeemer and God the Holy Spirit (power and courage – shown as a dove). The Holy Spirit lives in Christians who have faith in Jesus. • Christians are monotheists – they have a belief in only One God 	<p>Reasons for Belief in God</p> <p>God reveals himself – makes himself known through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bible – God’s word (General Revelation) • Religious Experience – God may have spoken to someone in prayers or dreams. Or through a direct (special revelation e.g. St. Paul. • Natural World – God’s creation such as sunsets • Our sense of right and wrong • Proofs of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‡ Design Argument – Paley’s watch. Paley said that just as a watch shows there is a designer the world shows evidence of design and purpose therefore there must a designer which is God. ‡ First Cause Argument – Aquinas said that everything must have a cause; therefore the world has a cause. Because you can’t keep going back and back you have to come to a First Cause (which is something special and does not have a cause) and this is God.
<p>Symbolic Language</p> <p>No-one has ever seen God and because he is beyond human knowledge it is difficult to describe him – so Christians use “religious language” to try and put into words what God is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbols – example the Cross: this shows the suffering of Jesus (crucifixion) and the empty Cross shows that Jesus rose from the dead. • Metaphors – God is described as a “rock” meaning people can trust him. • Analogy – God is like something. God is called “father” because he is someone who looks after people. <p>Problems: by using everyday language we are giving God human qualities when God is not like us.</p>	<p>Reasons for Non-Belief in God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unanswered prayers – but God may not answer because there is not enough faith or what is being asked for is not in God’s plan, or He expects us to help ourselves and others. • Scientists believe the world began with the Big Bang • Feuerbach said God is only in man’s imagination because man needs a purpose in life so makes up an idea of God to make his life better. Yet just because you can imagine something this does not mean it does not exist. • Not everyone understands right and wrong in the same way so how can our knowledge of it come from the same source – God?

Beliefs about deity

<p>Jesus</p> <p>Christians believe that Jesus was Fully human and fully God. They use the word incarnation to describe this.</p> <p>Jesus is seen as the perfect example of God-like behaviour and attitudes – he is a teacher and guide. Many of his teachings are found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and in parables.</p> <p>Jesus’ death is particularly important to Christians as through it God reconciles the world to himself so that God and humans can be made one – this teaching is called the Atonement. Jesus has taken away peoples’ sins and so he is seen as a Saviour and Redeemer.</p> <p>Christians believe that Jesus did not stay dead but rose and returned to his Father for eternity. This is called the Resurrection and is celebrated at Easter.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Miracles</p> <p>Christians believe that God has revealed himself to people through his miracles. He acts in the world.</p> <p>Definition: A miracle is an act of God which is breaking or overturning the laws of nature. The laws of nature tell us how the world works (e.g. gravity).</p> <p>Christian Life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians pray for miracles – someone to be cured – or might to go Lourdes • Some Christians believe that the miracles in the Bible are symbolic stories with a message; e.g. the feeding of the 5,000 is a message to tell people to share and help. • A miracle is not just an event but has the power to transform lives.
<p>The Holy Spirit</p> <p>Jesus promised not to leave his disciples alone but send the Holy Spirit to them. This took place on the day of Pentecost. This experience totally changed their lives.</p> <p>Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is active in the world today and gives them guidance, hope, faith and understanding as well as the strength to live up to the teachings of Jesus.</p> <p>The Holy Spirit is said to inspire people and help them spread love in the world.</p> <p>The wind is a good symbol of the Holy Spirit because you cannot see it, but you can see its effect in the world.</p>	<p>Arguments against miracles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincidence/chance/luck • People’s stories or miracles can’t be trusted • God doesn’t exist • Science has explained many of the miracles in the Bible. <p>Arguments for Miracles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus did many miracles in the Bible, e.g. Feeding the 5,000; walking on water; raising the dead • Faith in God and Jesus • Modern Day miracles have happened at Lourdes or in Revivalist meetings <p>Philosophical Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does God only intervene sometimes • Can Science explain everything • We often misuse the word ‘miracle’

ACTIVITY – The Nature of God

What do Christians believe God to be like? Using the images below write down what Christians believe in the boxes.



ACTIVITY – Why Christians believe in God.

Below are the Five theological proofs to show God exists – link up the explanation of the proof to its correct name.

Ontological Proof

This proof states that God exists because within ourselves we have the ability to know the difference between right and wrong and this ability must have come from God.

Cosmological Proof

This proof states that people describe God as '*that than which nothing greater can be conceived*'. You cannot think of anything greater or more important than the idea of God so therefore there must be a God.

Teleological Proof (Design Argument)

This proof comes from Christians who believe God has spoken to them or revealed his wishes to them through visions, the Bible etc.

Moral Argument

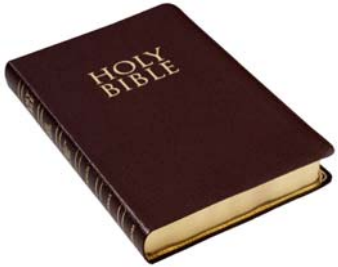
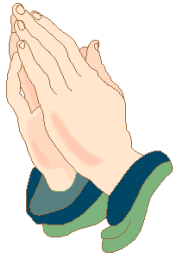
This proof states that everything that happens has a cause so therefore something/someone must have caused the world to begin. However because you cannot keep going back and back there must be a First Cause somewhere to start everything off but this first cause has to be very special and cannot have been caused itself. Therefore this first cause is God.

Experience

A philosopher called William Paley said that if you were walking along and came across a watch you would know that it had been designed for a purpose: to tell the time. And so if you look at the world you know that because it is so complicated it too must have been designed. The designer has to be so special it could only have been God.

ACTIVITY – Why Christians believe in God continued

What else do Christians say when they are asked why they believe in God?



Who was St. Paul? What happened to him to show that Jesus exists?

Why do people **NOT** believe in God?

ACTIVITY – Miracles

What is a miracle?



Jesus performed many miracles – give an example by the different types:

Nature =

Healing =

Raising people from the dead =

This is a picture showing the miracle at Lourdes. Explain what happened and why many people go there.



ACTIVITY – Miracles continued

What are the different interpretations of the miracles in the Bible?

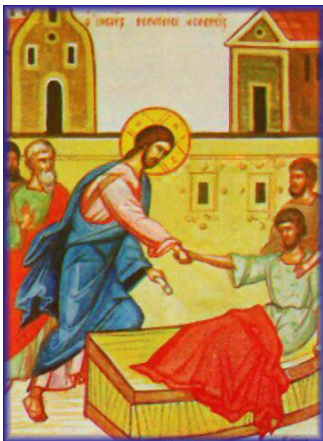
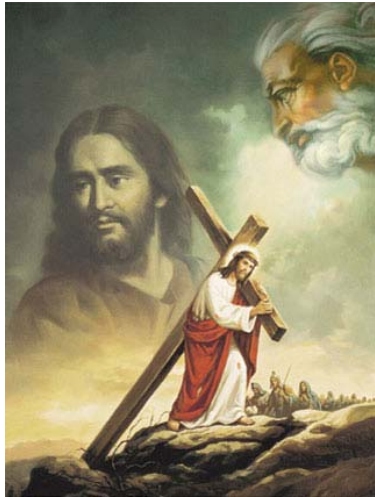
Why do some people say miracles do not happen?

How might a Christian respond to people saying well God doesn't exist because he does not answer my prayers?

ACTIVITY - Jesus

Who was Jesus? Why is he important to Christians? What do Christians know about Jesus? What was his role?

Try and answer some of the above questions by putting in your thoughts in the boxes by the images.



This is a full mark answer.

Describe what Christians believe about God.

(6 marks)

Christians are monotheists, meaning they believe in only one God. They believe that this God is all powerful (omnipotent). This means that he is powerful as he created the universe out of nothing and also created humans. They also believe that He is all loving as He gave His only son, Jesus, to the world and to die for men so that man's sins could be forgiven and that they could have eternal life with God in heaven. As well as this they believe that God is a "Trinity" made up of God the Father (the creator and sustainer of the world), God the Son, (Jesus, the Redeemer and Saviour who died on the cross so sins could be forgiven) and the Holy Spirit (the presence of God, hope and courage, who lives in Christians). They also believe that He is all knowing (omniscient) - He knows everything that has happened, is happening and will happen. They believe that He (Jesus) will judge everyone on Judgement Day (Parousia) on how they live their life to determine whether they go to heaven or hell. They also believe He is everywhere (omnipresent) and so He can be anywhere and everywhere at any time. They believe that He is forgiving, and so when people confess and ask for forgiveness, he will forgive them. Finally, they believe that God is all good and perfect with no sin.

This is a full mark answer because the candidate has shown many different beliefs about God. The candidate has not misread the question and talked about why Christians believe but has concentrated on giving ideas and explaining what is meant by them. He/she has not just given a list of ideas. **Note:** you are allowed to talk about Jesus as well as God.

Explain why some Christians might find it difficult to believe in miracles. (c marks)

Some Christians may find it difficult to believe in miracles, as they may have never experienced one personally. Therefore they may wonder why God doesn't always intervene, and find it hard to understand why a God who loves everyone the same may only perform miracles sometimes. Also they may think that miracles that have previously happened may be down to coincidence, chance or luck and not necessarily an act of God. Also, Science has tried and has explained some of the miracles in the Bible, and so they may find it hard to completely trust that miracles have actually happened (miracles are defined as something that overturns the laws of nature) as science can explain them. Also, they may find it hard to completely believe and trust in people's stories and so may not think that you can prove that a miracle has happened.

This question has caused difficulties in the past because candidates are more used to answering a question on why Christians do believe in miracles. Although this answer did achieve full marks I, as an examiner, would have liked to have seen more use of the word "because" – because this shows that the candidate is explaining. However, the candidate did give philosophical reasons for not believing in miracles.

Why do Christians believe in miracles?

(c) 'Believing in God is no longer important.' Discuss this statement. You should include different supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. (12 marks)

I do not agree, as I think that believing in God is still important. I think this because God created the world and universe and as we live in this world, He is still present and so we should have belief in Him. However, I think that atheists may disagree as they do not have belief in God at all. I also think that science and the power of humans are trying to create answers for everything, where there may be an unknown spiritual answer. I think therefore that believing in God is important as He may have these answers and may help to answer them. Also I think that as there are many bad things in the world (such as war) belief in God is important as Christians would believe that God can help them and can sometimes answer prayers of help. However, again people who do not believe in God may think that belief is no longer important as God does not seem to be present due to all of the bad things in the world. Although Christians would argue that this is humans fault as God gave humans free will and that evil entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Also, they believe that the Devil is influencing the evil in the world and so believe in God is important as He can help to conquer this evil.

Can you now improve on this answer?

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Now you try an answer:

(d) Describe the reasons Christians might give in support of their belief in God. [6 marks]

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(c) "If miracles were true, they would happen all the time". Discuss this statement. You should include different supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.
(12 marks)

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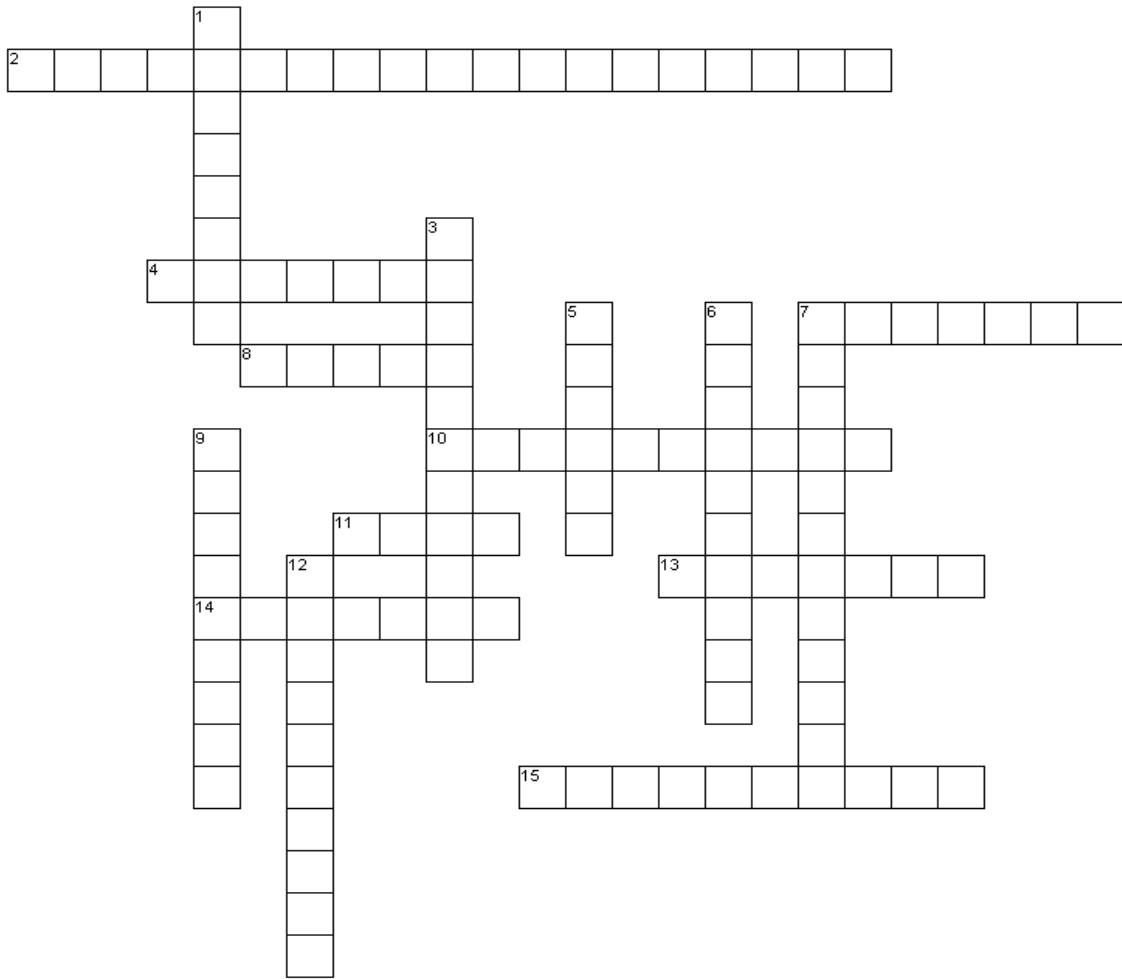
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Across

2. These two words means that God may have revealed himself to someone through dreams or visions
4. A definition of this word is that God has overturned the laws of nature
7. This is the word used to explain that God has three different roles but is one God
8. Christians believe that this is the revealed word of God
10. This word means that God knows everything
11. Some people do not believe God exists because of this
13. This is the word used to describe someone who does not believe in God
14. This words means that God was no beginning and no end
15. This word means that God has made himself and his wishes known to people

Down

1. This is the word used to describe someone who does not know if God exists or not
3. This is the argument which shows that God exists because there is design and purpose in the world
5. This is the word used to describe someone who believes in a personal God
6. This word means that God is all-powerful
7. This word means that God is beyond understanding or human knowledge
9. Some Christians believe this will happen on the last day
12. This word means that God is all loving