

# Important Words, Terms and Phrases for R.E.

## Introduction

**The Trinity** Christian belief that there is only one God who acts in the world as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Roman Catholic; Orthodox; Protestant:** The three main branches of Christianity

**Ethical Monotheism** belief that there is only one God who is righteous and good and who is to be worshipped by following His moral commands.  
(e.g. Judaism)

**Covenant** special agreement between God and (for example) Abraham that he would give Abraham and His descendants the land of Canaan.

**Torah** God's instruction, 'Law', commandments, given to Israel via Moses. Consists of the first five books of the Bible.

**Tenakh** Jewish holy book (what Christians call the Old Testament). In three parts: the **Torah** (law); the **Nevi'im** (the prophets); and the **Ketuvim** (the writings).

**Mitzvoth** the commandments of God.

**Talmud** a collection of Jewish rabbinical teachings - explains the mitzvoth of the Torah.

**Halakhah** the past decisions of rabbis (Torah and Talmud) of what the commandments mean, provide a guideline ('path') of how to live your life as a Jew.

**Orthodox Jews** believe that Jews should obey all God's commands literally.

**Hasidic Jews** are very or ultra-orthodox Jews.

**Reform Jews** have attempted to modernise and interpret their laws to fit the modern world, as to a greater extent, have **Liberal Jews**.

## Section 1 - Marriage and the Family

**Marriage** the condition of a man and woman legally united for the purpose of living together and, usually, creating lawful off-spring.

**Divorce** legally dissolve a marriage so that the partners are free to marry someone else.

**Cohabitation** a man and woman living together without being married.

**Promiscuity** having sexual intercourse with several partners and without commitment. It is often called '**casual sex**'. In the Bible it is often called **fornication** - although **fornication** may be applied to any, single act of pre-marital sex.

**Adultery** an act of sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than their marriage partner.

**Monogamy** marriage to one partner only (for life)

**Polygamy** marriage to more than one partner at a time.

**Serial monogamy** marrying only one partner at a time, but divorcing and re-marrying several times.

**Nuclear family** the basic family unit: mother, father and children living as a unit.

**Extended family** family including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins living as a unit, or in very close proximity and having a lot of mutual contact.

**One-Parent Family** where only one of the parents is bringing up the children (this can be because of separation, divorce, death of marriage partner or unmarried parent).

**Reconstituted family** where two sets of children (step-brothers and sisters) become one family when their respective divorced parents marry each other.

**The Seventh Commandment** You shall not commit adultery.

**The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church (1994)** a systematic question and answer system by which the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are taught and learned.

**Encyclicals** long letters published by the Pope and containing his teachings.

**“Something to Celebrate”** a report published by the Church of England’s Board of Responsibility in 1995 suggesting that cohabiting couples should be welcomed and supported by the Church, “recognising that for many this is a step along the way to the fuller commitment of marriage.”

**Living in sin** a term used by some Christians to describe cohabitation.

**Sacrament** a public, ritual action by which Christians receive grace, that is, experience the power and love of God in their lives. The Roman Catholic Church believes that the marriage ceremony gives a couple the Grace of God to make the marriage work.

**Kiddushin** = ‘made holy’ is the Jewish (Hebrew) word for marriage.

**Huppah** is a canopy under which a Jewish couple get married. It is a symbol of the couple’s new home and unites them under one roof.

**Ketubah** the Jewish marriage contract - in which the husband agrees to provide for his wife and specifies her share in the husband’s estate in the event of divorce or death.

**Get** This is a Jewish certificate of divorce that a man gives to his wife in divorce. It is written and given by a:

**Bet Din** a group of three senior rabbis.

**The Fifth Commandment** Honour your father and mother....  
(The Roman Catholic Church counts it as the fourth commandment)

**Christian Organisations to help and support Family**  
National Children’s Home (Methodist Church)  
The Children’s Society (Church of England)

Church Aided Schools (C of E and R.C.)  
Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Girls’ Brigade, Boys’ Brigade etc. are usually church-based.

Catholic Marriage Advisory Council  
National Catholic Child Welfare Council

Methodist Homes for the Aged.

<b>Shabbat</b>	The sabbath - the Jewish weekly holy day. Friday sunset to Saturday nightfall.
<b>kashrut</b>	the Jewish food laws.
<b>heder</b>	Jewish synagogue school
<b>shema</b>	the Jewish prayer and statement of belief (creed). It begins, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one...."
<b>Bar Mitzvah</b>	the Jewish boys Coming-of-Age ceremony at 13 years = Son of the Commandment.

## Section 2 - Social Harmony

**The Married Woman's Property Act 1882** married women could keep their property separate from their husband's.

**The Representation of the People Act 1918** allowed women over 31 to vote in parliamentary elections (men could do so at 21).

**The Electoral Reform Act 1928** gave the vote to women over 21 and allowed women to stand as MPs.

**The Equal Pay Act 1970** required employers to pay women the same pay as men for like work.

**The Sex Discrimination Act 1975** made it illegal to discriminate in jobs on grounds of sex or whether a person is married.

**Mitzvot** Jewish laws/ commandments.

**minyan** the minimum number of Jews required for a synagogue service. (a quorum). Women cannot form a minyan in Orthodox Judaism.

**Multi-ethnic Society** a society composed of people from different ethnic (racial/cultural) backgrounds.

**The Race Relations Act 1976** unlawful to discriminate on grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins...  
unlawful to use threatening or abusive or insulting words in public which could stir up racial hatred.  
illegal to publish anything likely to cause racial hatred.

**Racial Prejudice** thinking certain races are inferior or superior, usually without evidence.

**Racial Discrimination** putting prejudice into practice and treating people less favourably because of their racial, national, ethnic or colour origins.

**Racism** the belief that some races are superior to others, based on supposed biological facts which science has shown to be untrue.

**The Commission for Racial Equality** set up by the government in 1976 to enforce the Race Relations Act.

**The Parable of the Good Samaritan** a story Jesus told to illustrate His teaching “Love your neighbour as yourself” People of all races, even past enemies, are our neighbours.

**The Holocaust** Hitler’s and the Nazi’s attempts to destroy all European Jews. Over 6 million Jews perished horribly.

**A Multi-faith Society** many different religions in one society.

**Religious Pluralism** accepting all faiths as having an equal right to co-exist.

**Mono-faith** having only one religion.

**Non-Conformists** Protestants who were not of the Church of England.

**The Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland** established in 1990 - includes all the major churches. In every town churches have their own groups known as -

**Churches Together**

**The Council of Christians and Jews** has existed since World War 2, to promote better understanding between the two religions.

**The Inter-Faith Network for the UK** represents Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs and works for increased tolerance and understanding - encourages harmony.

**The Sharing of Faiths Movement** founded in Glasgow in the 1970s by Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. It meets on a monthly basis and has an annual ‘Presentation’ in the city centre with stalls explaining each religion to the people of Glasgow.

### Section 3 - Believing in God

**Numinous** a feeling of awe and wonder, a feeling that there is something greater than you which you can only call God. A famous German scholar, Rudolf Otto, called this feeling ‘the numinous’ in his book “The Idea of the Holy”

**Conversion** a change or ‘turn around’ in a person’s life. A conversion experience would be a definite feeling that led to a desire to change one’s life and be more committed to a faith.

**Mystical** a mystical experience where a person feels that in some way he/she has been in contact with God in a special way e.g. a strong numinous experience, or a vision, a powerful dream etc.

**Miracles** events which seem to break a natural law and for which the only explanation is God.

**The Dunkirk Miracle in 1940**

**The Image of Mary at Knock in Ireland in 1879**

**Paley's Watch** From William Paley's "Natural Theology" 18 02. If you came across a watch in an uninhabited place, you could not say it had been put there by chance. The complexity of its mechanism would make you say it had a designer. The universe is far more complex than a watch and so if a watch needs a watchmaker, the universe needs a universe-maker and that could only be God.

**The Design Argument** As above

**The Cosmological Argument** everything has a cause. It is logical to assume that the universe has a cause which could only be God.

NB. the interdependence shown by the Nitrogen Cycle.

Three forms of the argument:

**The Way of Motion (St Thomas Aquinas 1270)** everything is changing or moving; everything is changed or moved by something else; what started it off? There must be an **Unmoved Mover** - something which moves everything else without being moved itself. This Unmoved Mover is what people understand to be God.

**The First Cause Way (St Thomas Aquinas 1270)** everything has a cause - everything is caused by something else. There can't be an infinite regress of causes because something must have started it off - **The Uncaused Cause** or **First Cause**, which is eternal, must be God.

**The Principle of Sufficient Reason (Leibniz, Theodicy, 1710)**

If the universe is eternal, it has no explanation

Everything has an explanation

Reasonable to assume the universe has an explanation. The only explanation would be an Unmoved Mover or First Cause which could only be God. Therefore there must be a God.

**Moral evil** actions done by humans which cause suffering.

**Natural evil** things like earthquakes and floods which cause suffering and have nothing to do with humans. Non-moral evil.

**Benevolent** a word used to describe God as good and kind.

**Omnipotent** all powerful, almighty - can do anything.

**Omniscient** all knowing - knowing everything that has happened and will happen.

**Theodicy** a way of explaining why there is suffering in a world made by a good, all-powerful God.

**The Parable of the Sheep and Goats** a story of Jesus to show that when people help others in need, they are, in fact, serving Him.

## **Section 4 - Issues of Life and Death**

**The Sanctity of Life** life is special and precious - it is a gift from God and so essentially belongs to God. Christians and Jews believe that life is **sacred** - it should be treated as holy and, therefore, valued and preserved.

**The Sixth Commandment** You shall not kill (murder).

**Resurrection** at a time in the future (often called the Last Day or The Day of Judgement) the bodies of the dead will be raised. For believers it will be an immortal, eternal body.

**Immortality of the Soul** the belief that humans have a body and a soul (personality, self) which survives death and after death goes to a spiritual (non-physical) place where God is.

**The Thirteen Principles of the Faith** set out by **Maimonides** and which all Jews are expected to believe - includes the resurrection of the dead.

**House of Life** what Jewish people call cemeteries.

**Abortion** the termination of the life of a foetus

**Infanticide** killing a baby after birth

**Abortion on Demand** women being allowed an abortion without any questions asked.

**The Abortion Act 1967** made abortions legal in Britain with certain provisos. The 1990 Act limits abortions to within 24 weeks of pregnancy beginning.

**Doctrine of Double Effect** if a person takes an action to achieve one thing knowing that it will also produce another effect, he/she cannot be blamed for the second. e.g. treating of cancer in a pregnant woman kills the foetus.

**LIFE and SPUC** organisations that campaign for the rights of the foetus.

**Euthanasia** the action of inducing a quiet and easy death.

**Suicide** taking one's own life.

**Assisted suicide** where, for instance, a person has such a painful terminal disease that he cannot obtain the means for suicide and so he asks someone to give him the means and then he commits suicide.

**Voluntary Euthanasia** where a person has a painful, terminal disease and cannot do anything for himself and so he asks someone else to kill him painlessly. e.g. by the doctor giving him a lethal dose of painkillers.

**Non-Voluntary Euthanasia** where a person is not kept alive because she is regarded as having a life worse than death, but cannot make any decisions for herself.

**Not Striving to Keep Alive** this is the idea used in medicine that if people are suffering from a terminal illness, everything possible should be done to cure them. After this they should be given painkillers. If, for example, they have a heart attack, you do not need to go through all the resuscitation procedures. - not striving officiously to keep a person alive.

**Double Effect** same idea in principle as for abortion.

**PVS** Persistent, vegetative state = brain dead.

## Section 5 - Religion and the Media

**David Kremer** the programmes editor for BBC Religious Broadcasting

**The 'vaguely religious'** people who believe in God and in life's having a purpose, but only go to church for such things as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

**The Central Religious Advisory Council (CRAC)** a multi-faith body which advises the BBC and ITV on religious broadcasting. The Archbishop of York is the Chairman of it.

**The God-slot** a regular time for specifically religious programmes e.g. Songs of Praise around 6pm on Sundays on BBC or ITV's Sunday morning worship live from a church.



**Merry Christmas and  
a Happy New Year**