

GCSE Religious Studies

Sources of Wisdom and Authority: PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS

Section 1: Arguments for the existence of God

Content bullet	Source of wisdom and authority	What the source says	Summary in pupil speak...
1.1 Revelation	Hebrews 1:1-4	"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word."	God spoke to the Old Testament prophets in many ways, eg, visions and dreams. Now he has sent his Son, Jesus, who is the revelation of God himself on earth. Through Jesus, we see God.
1.2 Visions	Genesis 15	"After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."	God appears to Abraham in a vision. He tells him not to be afraid and makes his covenant with him.
	Matthew 17:1-13	"Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus."	This event is called the Transfiguration. Jesus and the disciples mentioned here have visions of Moses and Elijah, OT prophets. The voice of God speaks to them from the clouds. This helps the disciples realise that Jesus is the Son of God.
	St Joan of Arc	Joan of Arc was a French peasant girl who had vision of St Margaret, St Catherine and St Michael. She was told to force the English out of France. She eventually helped to capture French towns but was later sold to the English and burnt at the stake. She was made a Saint.	
1.3 Miracles	John 4:43-54	"There was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. "Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." "Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live." [...] Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed.	Jesus heals a royal official's son. He tells the official his son will not be healed unless he believes. The official has faith and his son is healed, so he and his whole family are led to believe in Jesus.

	Lourdes	St Bernadette had many visions of the Immaculate Conception. During one of the visions, she was told to dig for the spring of water, and later, to build a chapel. Catholics today go on pilgrimage to Lourdes and miracles of healing have been verified.	
1.4 Religious experiences	Catechism 66-67	"By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation. Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men."	The Catechism teaches that we can know God through the way he reveals his existence and his loving nature to us. In the past this was through the prophets, now we have Jesus who is the complete revelation of the Father.
1.5 Design Argument	Romans 1:18-24	"Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made..."	Creation itself reveals God. Though God is invisible, we see what he is like through his creation.
1.6 Cosmological Argument	Thomas Aquinas' First Three Ways	<p>Way One: The Argument from Motion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Nothing can move itself. 2) If every object in motion had a mover, then the first object in motion needed a mover. 3) This first mover is the Unmoved Mover, called God. <p>Way Two: Causation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There exists things that are caused (created) by other things. 2) Nothing can be the cause of itself (nothing can create itself.) 3) There cannot be an endless string of objects causing other objects to exist. 4) Therefore, there must be an uncaused first cause called God. <p>Way Three: Contingent & Necessary Objects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Contingent beings are caused. 2) Not every being can be contingent. 3) There must exist a being which is necessary to cause contingent beings. 4) This necessary being is God. 	Aquinas explains 3 chains of reasoning that point to the existence of God. In short, nothing in the world can cause itself - something must cause/create it. However, there cannot be an eternal chain of causation. There must be one first cause, which is God.
1.7 Problem of evil and suffering	Isaiah 45	"I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things."	Surely God would have known the evil and suffering that would happen? However, this doesn't mean that God created moral evil itself. In Isaiah, God is rewarding those who are obedient to him.

1.8 Solutions to the problem of evil and suffering	Psalm 119	"Remember your word to your servant, for you have given me hope. My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life."	The Psalm teaches that whatever trials we are going through, God is with us and his Word will give us everything we need to deal with them.
	Job	In the Book of Job, Job loses everything and questions God about why. He finds out that there can be purpose in suffering. It isn't a punishment or a sign of God's anger. Going through times of suffering can teach us and help us remain humble.	
	St Augustine	St Augustine said that suffering is not God's fault. He created humans to have free will, therefore humans can choose to do good or evil. This is what causes suffering.	
	St Irenaeus	St Irenaeus said suffering in this life is not a problem. It is part of a bigger plan and those who suffer will be rewarded when they die. By facing evil and suffering in this life we improve our souls - this is known as the 'vale of soul making.' Good can come from evil.	

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Section 2: Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Content bullet	Source of wisdom and authority	What the source says	Summary in pupil speak...
2.1 Marriage	Pope Francis - Not Just Good, But Beautiful	<p>"the union of a man and woman in marriage is a unique, natural, fundamental good for persons, communities and whole societies."</p> <p>"a family grounded in marriage is the first school where we learn to appreciate our own and others' gifts and where we begin to acquire the art of cooperative living."</p> <p>"children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother."</p>	Pope Francis says marriage is the basis of society and the ideal place to bring up a family. Family life is the first place we learn to appreciate and cooperate with others.
2.2 Sexual relationships	Catechism 2360-2365	<p>"Sexuality is ordered to the conjugal love of man and woman."</p> <p>"The conjugal love of man and woman thus stands under the twofold obligation of fidelity and fecundity."</p>	Sex is to be between a married man and woman. They are to be faithful to each other and procreate.
2.3 Family	Familiaris Consortio 36-85	Pope John Paul II says that family is part of God's plan for people. This includes marriage, raising children and bringing them into the family of God. Christian families form communities in society.	
2.4 Support for the family by the local Parish	Family Group Movement	Family Groups are parish friendship groups drawn from the Catholic community open to any parishioner irrespective of age or personal circumstances. Family Groups are made up of young, mature, single, widowed, married, separated and divorced parishioners who commit to spending time together once a month for low cost activities. The groups can become a valuable source of parish outreach as well as offering invaluable support and fellowship to their own members.	
	Catechism 2226	"Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. Family catechesis (teaching) enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families."	Parishes support families in raising children. They provide teaching about the Catholic faith and a Christian community to be part of.
2.5 Contraception	Humanae Vitae	"The Church teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life."	It is the teaching of the Catholic Church (here by Pope Paul VI) that every sexual act should be open to the possibility of new life. Therefore artificial

			contraception is not allowed.
2.6 Divorce and remarriage	Catechism 2382-2386	<p>"The marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptised persons can never be dissolved."</p> <p>"...marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."</p>	Divorce is not allowed. The Sacrament of marriage is broken only by death. Remarriage would be like committing adultery as the couple would still be married in God's eyes.
2.7 Equality of men and women in the family	Catechism 2207	"The family is the original cell of human life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. [...] The family is the community in which one can learn moral values, begin to honour God and make good use of freedom.	In most Catholic families husband and wife have equal roles. They are to raise the family in love together.
2.8 Gender prejudice and discrimination	Catechism 1938	"There exists also sinful inequalities that affect millions of men and women. These are in open contradiction of the Gospel."	Men and women are not always treated equally but this is against the church and Gospel teaching, which say they should be equal (this doesn't mean the same).