



SWGS KS4 VOCABULARY LIST: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

This list consolidates key vocabulary in the subject, making it easier for you to know, understand and use it accurately. This may be provided as a pre-filled glossary or a word list to complete. Your teachers will use this vocabulary frequently, and you will encounter it in reading. You will be expected to learn meanings and spellings.

Exam Paper 1: Christianity (Year 10)

Ascension	Going or being taken up; the event forty days after the resurrection when Jesus returned to glory in heaven.
Atonement	Making amends or payment for a wrong. The belief that reconciliation between God and humanity that was brought about by the death of Jesus as a sacrifice.
Baptism	The sacrament through which people become members of the Church. It involves the use of water as a symbol of the washing away of sin.
Believers' baptism	Initiation into the Church, by immersion in water, of people old enough to understand the ceremony/rite and who have made the decision to live a Christian life.
Bible	Source of wisdom and authority; a holy book containing both the Old and New Testaments.
Catholic	The tradition within the Christian Church which is led by the Pope; also called the Roman Catholic Church. (Note: The term 'catholic' refers to the communion of all Christians, the universal Church, although it is not a term included on this specification).
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)	A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.
Christ	Literally means 'Anointed One' in Greek; the Hebrew equivalent is Messiah. The leader promised by God to the Jews; Christians believe Jesus to be the Christ.

Christian Aid	A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.
Christmas	The festival/celebration to remember the birth of Jesus.
Church	The People of God/Body of Christ, among whom Christ is beloved to be present and active. Members of a particular Christian denomination/tradition, e.g. Roman Catholic, Methodist. A building in which Christians worship.
Creation	Bringing the world into existence; the belief that the world is God's loving creation.
Crucifixion	The death of Jesus; a form of the death penalty used by the Romans.
Easter	Festival/celebration of the resurrection of Jesus; the Easter season ends with Pentecost (50 days after Easter Sunday) which remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit to earth following the ascension.
Eucharist/Holy Communion	Literally 'thanksgiving'; a sacrament in which the death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated, using bread and wine.
Evangelism	Preaching the gospel (the good news about God) to convert people to the Christian faith.
Evil	The opposite of good; a cause of suffering and against the will of God.
The Father	The first Person of the Trinity, the belief in God as creator and Sustainer of the universe.
Food banks	Places in local communities where people in need can go to collect food; often run/supported by local churches and religious charities.
Grace	The unconditional and generous love that God shows to people who do not deserve it.
Heaven	Belief that after death Christians can enter a state of being with God for eternity.

Hell	Belief in a place of eternal suffering, or a state after death of being in separation from God.
Holy Spirit	The third Person of the Trinity; believed to be present with believers since Pentecost and active on earth.
Incarnation	Literally 'in flesh', or 'enfleshed;' belief that God took on human form in the person of Jesus.
Infant baptism	Sacrament of initiation of babies and young children into the Church.
Informal prayer	Spontaneous prayers spoken from the heart which are personal and unique to the person/people at the time.
Iona	Place of pilgrimage founded by St Columba in the fourth century.
Jesus	Believed by Christians to be the Son of God, he was a first century Jewish teacher living and travelling in Palestine/Israel.
Judgement	The belief that God will decide whether each person should receive eternal life or eternal punishment based on their earthly life.
Just	Fair or equal treatment, a state of justice. Belief about the nature of God as treating all people justly.
Liturgical worship	A church service which follows a set structure or ritual.
Law	Rules or commands which must be followed; the law of God is revealed in the Bible.
Lourdes	Place of pilgrimage where the Virgin Mary appeared to St Bernadette in a series of visions and it is claimed that miraculous healings have taken place.

Lord's Prayer	The prayer taught to the disciples by Jesus; also known as the 'Our Father' and widely said by Christians in both church services and privately.
Mission	Literally 'sent out'; the duty of Christians to spread the gospel (the good news about Jesus).
Non-liturgical worship/ informal worship	A service which does not follow a set text or ritual; sometimes spontaneous or charismatic.
Omnipotent	The belief that God is 'all powerful'.
The oneness of God	The belief that God is one singular divine being (who can be manifest in the Three Persons of the Trinity).
Original sin	Belief human nature is flawed, and that we all have the tendency to sin; traditional belief held by some Christians that this came from Adam & Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit as recorded in Genesis 3.
Orthodox	A denomination/tradition of the Church popular in some parts of Eastern Europe. There are two main Orthodox Churches – Greek and Russian.
Persecution	Facing hostility and ill-treatment; some Christians face punishment and death for practising their faith.
Pilgrimage	A religious journey to a holy site/sacred place, it is an act of worship and devotion.
Prayer	Communicating with God through words of praise, thanksgiving or confession, or requests for his help or guidance; listening to and speaking to God.
Private worship	A believer giving God praise and worship on their own.
Protestant	Christian denominations in which authority is generally based on the Bible, rather than Church tradition/teaching. (e.g. Anglican, Methodist, Baptist).
Reconciliation	Making up and rebuilding relationships between two groups/sides after disagreement.

Resurrection	Being raised from the dead; the event three days after the crucifixion when it is believed that God raised Jesus from the dead. The form that many Christians believe the afterlife will take, referring to either physical or spiritual bodies.
Sacrament	The outward and visible sign of an invisible and spiritual grace. (e.g. Baptism and the Eucharist are recognised as sacraments by most Christians).
Salvation	Being saved; belief that through God's grace, Jesus' death and resurrection brought about salvation for humanity. Saving of the soul and being able to enter eternal life in heaven.
Set prayers	These are prayers written throughout the centuries which many Christians worldwide use (e.g. The Lord's Prayer).
Sin	Behaviour which is against God's laws and wishes/against Christian principles of morality.
The Son	The second Person of the Trinity; Jesus believed to be God incarnate.
Son of God	A title used for Jesus; the second Person of the Trinity. Shows the special relationship between Jesus and God.
Street pastors	A Christian organisation involving people working, mainly at night, on city streets giving care to those who need it.
Suffering	An effect of evil; undergoing pain and hardship.
Tearfund	A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.
Trinity	The belief that God as One includes God also being manifest in three Persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Word	In the Bible, John 1 describes God creating the world through his eternal Word. This links the eternal Word to Jesus in the statement: <i>"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).</i>
Worship	Showing adoration and reverence; offering praise to God.

Ablution (wudu)	Ritual washing before prayer.
Adalat/justice	Part of the nature of God in Shi'a Islam; the belief that God is fair.
Adam	One of the prophets of Allah. The father of humankind; built the Ka'aba.
Akhirah (life after death)	Belief in a new stage of life after death.
Angels	They are spiritual beings created from elements of light. They gave God's messages to the prophets and watch over humans.
Arafat	Part of the Hajj pilgrimage. Place where Prophet Muhammad preached his last sermon and pilgrims gather to pray.
Ashura	Important festival in Shi'a Islam, to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein (Muhammad's grandson). Sunni Muslims observe Ashura as a day of repentance for sins in the belief that they will be forgiven.
Authority	Having power and status. The Qur'an has supreme authority as the word of Allah, this means it must be believed and obeyed.
Beneficence	Literally 'doing good'. One of the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah and belief about his nature, the generosity that Allah shows to humans.
Day of Judgement	The day when Allah will decide about individual deeds and on reward or punishment.
Fairness	Belief about the nature of God; refers to Allah's justice. He treats all humans equally and as they deserve.
Fasting	Not eating or drinking; one of the Five Pillars is Sawm during Ramadan.
The Five Pillars	Important duties for Sunni Muslims which support the main principles of Islam. Shahadah, salah, zakah, sawm and hajj.

The Five Roots of Usul ad-Din	The foundations of the faith in Shi'a Islam; five key beliefs: Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Adalat (justice), prophethood, imamate, resurrection.
Friday prayer/Jummah	Friday prayers in the mosque, where a sermon (khutbah) is heard.
Giving alms	Giving alms means giving to those in need, e.g. money, food, time. A key practice in Islam; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts (Zakah).
The Gospels (Injil)	Holy book /source of authority ; literally 'good news' and it is the good news about Isa (Jesus), who was a prophet of Islam.
Greater jihad	The personal struggle of every Muslim to live by the teachings of their faith.
Hajj	One of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts; pilgrimage to Makkah, which all Muslims must undertake at least once in their lives, unless prevented by problems over wealth or health.
Heaven (Jannah)	Referred to as Paradise; Allah's reward after death to those who have been faithful to him and who have repented of their sins.
Hell	It is a place of great suffering after death for those who have rejected the Qur'an's teachings and have led a wicked life. For some it will last forever.
Human accountability	The belief that everyone must take responsibility for their actions and will be questioned about them on the Day of Judgement.
Human freedom	Humans have control over their thoughts, feelings and actions.
Human responsibility	Humans are responsible for most of what they do because they have free will and so will be accountable on the Day of Judgement.
Ibrahim (Abraham)	One of the prophets of Allah. He rebuilt the Ka'aba.
Id ul Adha	Festival; celebration of the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for Allah.

Id ul Fitr	Festival; celebration that comes at the end of Ramadan and marks the end of fasting.
The imamate	One of the Five Roots of Usul-ad-Din, 'Leadership.' Shia belief in the twelve imams who succeeded Muhammad as the leaders of Islam.
Immanence	The belief that God is close to humanity and involved in the world.
Jibril (Gabriel)	Angel who dictated the Qur'an to Muhammad; on Judgement Day he will assist with the weighing of a person's deeds.
Jihad	'To struggle'. The personal or collective struggle against evil.
The Ka'aba	Part of the Hajj pilgrimage; cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. All Muslims face towards it when they pray.
Khums	One of the Ten Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam; practice of alms giving.
Lesser jihad	This refers to the military struggle to defend Islam. It is carried out according to strict and clear-cut rules.
Makkah (Mecca)	Place of pilgrimage during Hajj; the spiritual centre of Islam.
Mercy	Belief about the nature of God and one of Allah's 99 Beautiful Names; God's willingness to forgive the sins of those who repent.
Mika'il (Michael)	Angel who gives spiritual and material help to humans; on Judgement Day he will assist with the weighing of a person's deeds.
Mina	Site of pilgrimage during Hajj; where pilgrims take part in the stoning of pillars.
Mosque	Muslim place of worship.
Movements (rak'ahs)	Actions and ritual movements made during salah (prayer) consisting of recitations, standing, bowing and prostration.

Muzdalifah	Site of pilgrimage during Hajj; where pilgrims hold a night prayer and rest after the Stand on Mount Arafat.
Muhammad	The last and greatest of the prophets. He received the Qur'an and his Sunnah and Hadiths are also important sources of authority.
The Night of Power	The night on which Muhammad received the first revelations of the Qur'an.
Omnipotence	All-powerful; belief about the nature of God and one of the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah.
Pilgrimage	A religious journey to a holy site/sacred place, it is an act of worship and devotion.
Predestination	One of the Six Articles of Faith in Sunni Islam; the belief that everything that happens has been decided already by Allah.
The Psalms	Holy book/source of authority; sacred prayers and poems written by King Dawud (David), a prophet of Allah.
The Qur'an	Holy Book and most important source of authority in Islam. It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and is the final revelation of God to humankind.
Ramadan	Month during which Muslims fast (sawm) from dawn to sunset.
Recitations	Part of the practice of salah (prayer); the reciting of verses from the Qur'an.
Resurrection	One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; belief that after death, all people will be raised from the dead to face judgement.
Revelation	When God is revealed to humans; belief that Allah shows his nature and will through the words of the Qur'an.

Risalah (Prophethood)	One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; belief in the prophets as messengers sent by God to communicate to people.
Salah	Prayer; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts.
Sawm	Fasting from dawn to dusk during Ramadan; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts.
The Scrolls of Abraham	Holy book/source of authority; individual revelations to Ibrahim that were written on parchment but have perished.
The Shahadah	Muslim declaration of faith; one of the Five Pillars in Sunni Islam.
Shi'a Islam	Muslims who believe in the Imamate, successorship of Ali.
Six Articles of Faith	The foundations of the faith in Sunni Islam; six key beliefs: Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Angels, Holy Books, Prophethood, Akhirah, Predestination.
Sunni Islam	Muslims who believe in the successorship of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.
Tawhid (the oneness of God)	One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; the oneness and unity of Allah.
The Ten Obligatory Acts	These are requirements for Shi'a Muslims. They include salah, sawm, zakah, hajj and jihad (duties also for Sunni Muslims) but the final five are not part of the Sunni tradition – khums, encouraging good, discouraging wrong, showing love for God and people, disassociation with enemies of God.
The Torah	Holy book/source of authority; given by God to the prophet Musa (Moses) on Mount Sinai.
Zakah	One of the Five Pillars and Ten Obligatory Acts; giving alms.

Exam Paper 2: Thematic Studies (Year 11)

Theme B: Religion and Life

Abortion	The deliberate ending of a pregnancy.
Afterlife	Beliefs about what happens to 'us' after our body has died; in many religions this relates to life after death or immortality in some form.
Animal experimentation	The use of animals for medical research and product testing.
Awe and wonder	Sense of wonderment at nature; often linked to the feeling that God is involved/revealed through it.
Big Bang Theory	Scientific theory about the origins of the universe; belief that the universe began almost 14 billion years ago with a reaction of particles from a singularity followed by a process of inflation and expansion.
Death	The end of the physical, bodily life.
Dominion	Belief that humans have been given control/charge of the world.
Environment	The world around us; this can be made up natural or artificial surroundings.
Euthanasia	Assisting with the ending of life for a person who is terminally ill or has degenerative illness; often known as assisted suicide.
Evolution	Scientific theory of the development of species which involves a process of natural selection and survival of the fittest.
Natural resources	Resources which are found in nature – fossil fuels (e.g. coal, oil, natural gas), plants etc.
Pollution	Contamination of an environment with harmful substances.
Quality of life	The standard of health, comfort and happiness/fulfilment experienced by a person or group.

Responsibility	Having a duty or obligation to act in a certain way.
Sanctity of life	Belief that life is sacred/special because it was created by God, or because we are each unique individuals.
Scientific	Knowledge based on what can be observed (e.g. regularities in nature) and experimentation.
Stewardship	Duty given by God to humankind to look after the created world, and all life within it.

Exam Paper 2: Thematic Studies (Year 11)

Theme D: Religion, Peace and Conflict

Conflict	Dispute between sides, can be between individuals, groups or nations.
Forgiveness	Letting go of blame against a person for wrongs they have done; moving on.
Holy war	War that is believed to be sanctioned by God.
Justice	Bringing fairness back to a situation.
Just war	Set of rules for fighting a war in a way believed to be justified and acceptable to God.
Nuclear deterrence	Having nuclear weapons with the aim of deterring/preventing other states attacking for fear of retaliation and nuclear war (possibly leading to Mutually Assured Destruction).
Nuclear weapons/war	A weapon of mass destruction which causes widespread damage and loss of life. Nuclear war would be a war fought using these weapons.
Pacifism	Belief that all violence is wrong, which then affects all behaviours.
Peace	The opposite of war; harmony between all in society.

Peace-making	Working to bring about peace and reconciliation.
Protest	A statement or action to express disagreement; can be an organised event to demonstrate disagreement with a policy or political action.
Reconciliation	Making up and rebuilding relationships between two groups/sides after disagreement.
Retaliation	To pay someone back for their harmful actions.
Terrorism	Use of violence and threats to intimidate others; used for political purposes to build fear in the ordinary population and to secure demands from Government.
Victims of war	Those who are harmed during a war, for example those killed, injured or left homeless.
Violence	Behaviour involving physical force which intends to hurt, kill or cause damage.
War	Armed conflict between two or more sides.
Weapons of mass destruction (WMDs)	Weapons which cause widespread, indiscriminate damage (e.g. nuclear, chemical, biological).

Exam Paper 2: Thematic Studies (Year 11)

Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment

Addiction	Being addicted to/dependent on a particular substance; can be a cause of crime (e.g. stealing money to pay for illegal drugs).
Community service	Punishment involving the criminal doing a set number of hours of physical labour/work in their local community.
Corporal punishment	Punishment in which physical pain is inflicted on the criminal.

Crime	Action which breaks the law; can be against the person (e.g. murder), against property (e.g. vandalism), or against the state (e.g. treason).
Death penalty/Capital punishment	the execution of a criminal which is sanctioned by the state.
Deterrence	Aim of punishment; the threat of punishment as a way to put a person off committing crime (e.g. knowing they could go to prison if they steal).
Evil intentions	Having the desire to deliberately cause suffering or harm to another.
Forgiveness	Letting go of blame against a person for wrongs they have done; moving on.
Greed	Reason for committing crime – wanting or desiring something or more of something.
Hate crime	A crime committed because of prejudice views about a person or group.
Prison	Imprisonment is a form of punishment where a criminal is locked in a secure guarded building (prison) for a period of time.
Law	The rules a country demands its citizens follow, the breaking of which leads to punishment.
Mental illness	A medical condition that can cause changes to a person's behaviour; can be a cause of crime.
Murder	Unlawfully killing another person.
Poverty	The state of being without the things needed for a reasonable quality of life; can be a cause of crime.
Principle of utility	The concept of acting out of the greater good for the most people. (e.g. removing a dangerous criminal from society in order to protect others).

Reformation	Aim of punishment; helping the criminal see how and why their behaviour was wrong, so that their mindset changes for the better.
Retribution	Aim of punishment; getting the criminal back for their crimes.
Sanctity of life	Belief that life is sacred/special because it was created by God, or because we are each unique individuals.
Theft	Taking something without the owner's consent.
Unjust law	A legal requirement within a society that is believed to be unfair; a cause of crime if a person believes they cannot follow (or must act against) a law they believe is unjust.
Upbringing	The environment a child lives in, and the instructions they receive, while they are growing up; can be a cause of crime.

Exam Paper 2: Thematic Studies (Year 9)

Theme F: Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice

Charity	Voluntarily giving time or money to help people in need.
Discrimination	Actions that come from prejudice attitudes.
Equality	Belief that everyone is equal in value and worth.
Exploitation	Treating and paying people unfairly; benefitting disproportionately from the work they've done.
Fair pay	Payment that is appropriate for the work done.
Freedom of religious expression	The right to freely practice religion without discrimination or punishment; e.g. being able to freely attend your place of worship or being allowed space / time to pray in the workplace.

Homosexuality	Being physically/sexually attracted to persons of the same gender.
Human rights	The rights a person should be entitled to simply because they are a human being, e.g. education, fair treatment etc.
Interest	Money paid back on loans in addition to the original amount borrowed.
Justice	Fairness; working to fix an unfair situation.
Loan	Amount of money borrowed from a lender, usually paid back in instalments with interest.
People trafficking	Illegal transport of people from one country or area to another, often resulting in forced labour or sexual exploitation.
Positive discrimination/action	Positive discrimination is favouring a person or group to try and rectify negative treatment in the past; it is unlawful in the UK according to the Equality Act 2010. Positive action is putting things in place to help overcome disadvantage, or to meet the needs of protected groups / people with protected characteristics, to help them fully participate in an activity or workplace.
Poverty	The state of being without the things needed for a reasonable quality of life, so that day-to-day living is a struggle.
Prejudice	Negative thoughts, feelings or beliefs about a person (prejudging them) based on a characteristic they have, e.g. their sexuality or ethnicity.
Racial discrimination	Acting on prejudices against someone because of their ethnicity/skin colour.
Racial prejudice	Negative thoughts, feelings or beliefs about a person or group based on their ethnicity/skin colour.
Responsibility	Duty, e.g. the responsibility to work; to earn money for oneself.

Social justice	Bringing justice to society so that all people have the same opportunities, and can take advantage of them; includes projects to improve the life situation of those who may be disadvantaged, e.g. by educational support.
Wealth	Money and possessions a person has.