

GCSE RE

**Unit Four – Religion,
Crime and
Punishment**

Key words (Create your own glossary here)

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Revision guide – GCSE RE – Topic Four – Religion, Crime and Punishment

The glossary of key terms

Law and Order – rules of our society and how they are enforced. These rules exist to try to keep society a calm and safe place. They are based on ideas of *right or wrong*. Most of the rules are common sense, and we usually agree with them most of the time

Evil – an act which is very wicked or immoral. Many people associate these kinds of acts with an evil being. They are not understandable to ordinary people, going beyond what most see as simply wrong or bad, and even sickening people

Forgiveness – a process which a victim goes through changing feelings of resentment, hate or vengefulness towards an offender in order to move on. It is a central attitude in all religions

Justice – a belief in what is right and fair. It is also the main aim of any criminal system, that is to judge, punish the guilty and bring justice to the victims

Suffering – a feeling of pain, harm, distress or hardship which is caused by the actions of others when they commit crime

Morality – a person's or a religion's belief of what is right and wrong in terms of behaviour and actions. Most religious people have had their sense of morality shaped by their religion

Conscience – the voice in our head that tells us right from wrong. It is also seen as the sense of feeling guilty when you have done something wrong. Many religious people believe it is God's guidance

Sin – an act which goes against God's will; a religious offence. Many laws are there to enforce against sins, for example, taking a life and stealing. For religious people, committing sin is a great wrong and be punished by God in the afterlife

What is good and what is evil?



Evil

Something that is immoral and wicked and is usually seen as depraved and cruel

Good

That which is morally right



Are these people examples of evil?



Are these men an example of evil?

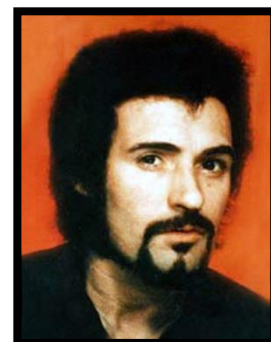
Between 1975 and 1980 **Peter Sutcliffe** preyed on women across Greater Manchester and Yorkshire. Most were mutilated and beaten to death. In 1981 he was convicted of 13 murders and seven attempted murders and given 20 life sentences.

He was transferred to Broadmoor in 1984 after he was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

Moors Murderer **Ian Brady**, who tortured and killed five children with Myra Hindley in crimes that shocked the nation, died in May 2017

His violent personality was shaped by an unstable background. His mother neglected him and he was raised by foster parents in the Gorbals, Glasgow's toughest slum.

He was jailed in 1966 - Nineteen years later, in November 1985, Brady was transferred from prison to a maximum-security hospital after being diagnosed a psychopath



Where do Christians think evil comes from?

Remember these theodicies from the Christian beliefs topic – we can use these to help us describe Christian belief in where they think evil comes from –

The Augustine Theodicy

Where did St. Augustine say evil came from?

Evil is seen as the abuse of the free will God gave to humans which allowed them to choose right from wrong

Therefore St. Augustine blamed Adam and Eve (particularly Eve!) for evil entering the world



The Devil (Satan)



Many Christians believe in the existence of an evil force, which they call the Devil or Satan – this being tries to tempt human beings into behaving badly and disobeying God, so evil is the Devil's work

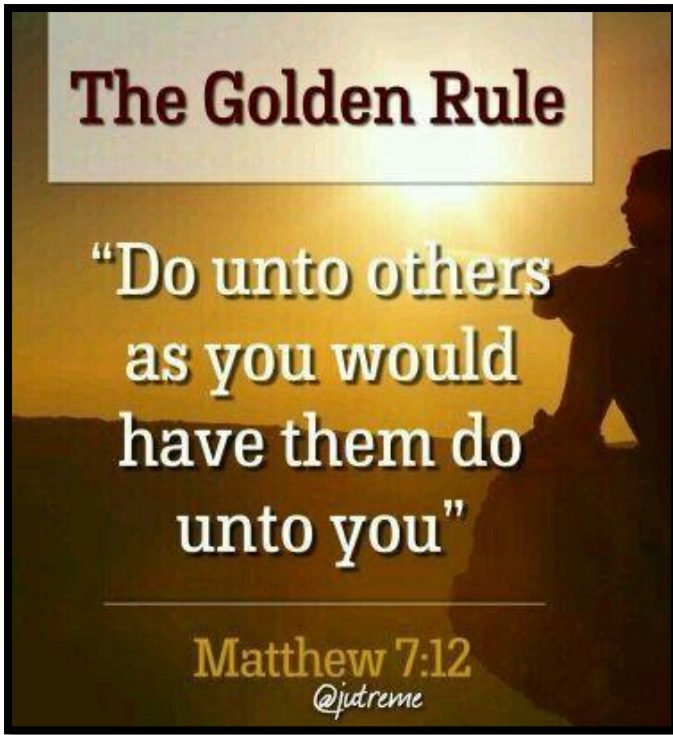
It is important to remember that not all Christians believe in the Devil though

The Irenaean theodicy

In order to be able to see and appreciate good, then evil has to exist – therefore evil is part of God's plan so all of us can appreciate the good times – this viewpoint is controversial with many Christians though

What is the Golden Rule in Christianity?

When it comes to being good, Christians will look to the teachings of Jesus and the example of the life that he led – helping the poor, the displaced and outcasts and the sick. Christians believe that we should consider the 'golden rule' that Jesus taught all of us –



To be good, Jesus taught this rule – helping others in need
This is called the ‘golden rule’

Are criminals evil?



This is Myra Hindley – she was the partner and lover of Ian Brady who we discussed above – both were known as the Moors Murderers

With Brady, she was responsible for kidnapping, torturing and murdering 5 children – is she an example of an evil criminal?

Criminal definitions –

Murder – the deliberate killing of someone

Theft – to permanently deprive someone of something they own

Hate crime – any crimes motivated by prejudice in the negative sense

Crimes against the person

Offences causing direct harm to a person, for example, murder, rape, GBH and hate crimes

Crimes against property

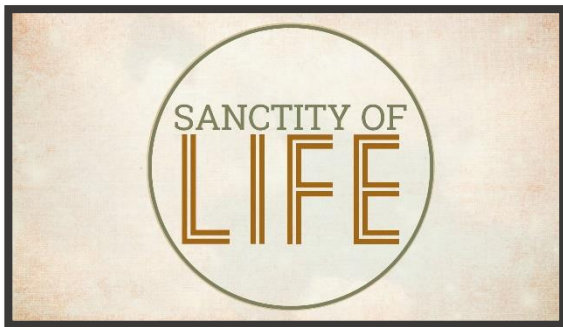
Offences that damage or deprive people of their property, for example, arson, burglary, trespassing

Crimes against the state

Offences that potentially endanger everyone or affect the smooth running of society, for example, terrorism, selling state secrets, perjury

Christian response to murder –

Remember this important teaching from the last topic



This is a central Christian belief that all human life is sacred or holy as our lives are given to us by God and only God is responsible for taking life

Christianity believes that all life is sacred, it should be protected and cherished. So, any murder must be wrong by definition.

Christians believe that murderers should be severely punished

Christian response to theft –

Theft is also against the laws of Christianity, but punishments are less harsh than for murder

Depending on what is taken, theft might have a bigger or lesser impact on someone's life

For example, to steal an old person's savings leaves them with only their pension to live on

Whereas to steal a person's car might only be an inconvenience until their insurance replaces it

Christian response to hate crime –



'Hate crime' really refers to the reason why the crime is committed, not the type of crime itself

You could say that because any type of crime could be a hate crime and be motivated by prejudice, then these are the worst type of crime

Remember when we looked at the murder of Antony Walker in 2005 in the last topic (lesson on forgiveness)? – murdered just because he was black

It is also true that hate crimes go against fundamental Christian teachings of equality and love, community and brotherhood

So is crime linked to evil?

Often crimes are so awful and sickening, we often describe the perpetrators as evil



The **Moors murders** were carried out by Ian Brady and Myra Hindley between July 1963 and October 1965, in and around Manchester, England. The victims were five children aged between 10 and 17—Pauline Reade, John Kilbride, Keith Bennett, Lesley Ann Downey and Edward Evans—at least four of whom were sexually assaulted.

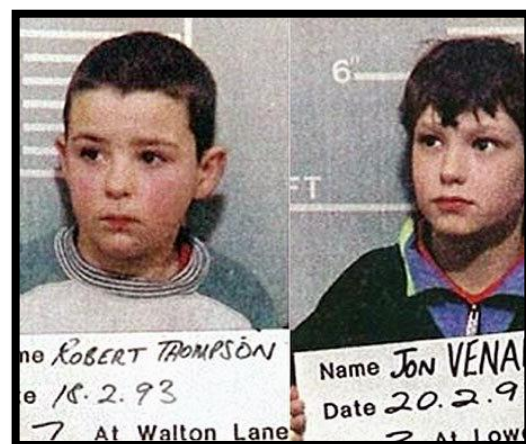
Are they evil?

James Patrick Bulger (16 March 1990 – 12 February 1993) was a boy from Kirkby, Merseyside, England, who was **murdered** on 12 February 1993, at the age of two.

He was abducted, tortured and **murdered** by two ten-year-old boys, Robert Thompson (born 23 August 1982) and Jon Venables (born 13 August 1982).

Are they evil?

Why might some people be evil or behave in ways that are sickening to the rest of us?



Many Christians also believe the devil is at work in the minds of these people, making them do terrible things and that is where evil comes from

Why do people commit crimes?

Upbringing - this might include the environment a person is brought up in, the morals of the family/friends/neighbourhood, whether a person is surrounded by crimes or criminal activity and the social and financial status of the family

Mental illness - the state of mind of a person may lead them into crime. They might have serious psychological issues with no understanding of right or wrong; might feel no guilt or compassion for others; might enjoy hurting others; might have educational learning issues and be easily led into crime; or are themselves victims of some event which has disturbed their minds, for example, depression or an abusive upbringing

Opposition to existing laws - some crimes are committed in protest about laws that exist that are considered either unfair or for the benefit of a select few in society. Sometimes laws have to be broken to get laws to be changed

Poverty - a person might commit a crime because they see no other alternative way to survive. They may have no money, no job or cannot provide for themselves or their children

Greed/hate - Emotions are often responsible for crime, our reaction to what goes on around us or what others have or do to us. We always want more so inherently we are greedy. People do bad things to us so hate leads us to take revenge

Addiction - A person may have an addiction, for example, to alcohol, drugs, sex or money which leads them into crime to feed their habit or their cravings. They may even be addicted to crime, for example, stealing

What would Christians say about this?

Christians would argue that the law should be followed

St. Paul in the Bible said: **‘to obey the laws of the land’**

Christians would argue that if you broke the law, then **punishment should follow**

If all people lived by the teachings of Jesus: **‘love your neighbour’ and ‘treat others how you want to be treated’** then many causes of crime might disappear

The phrase to **‘hate the sin not the sinner’** can be used here – criminals often need our help rather than our judgement

However, **punishments have to be given** or society would be chaotic but at the same time **the causes of crime have to be removed**

The aims of punishment

What are the aims of punishment?

For learning purposes, we shall call them **DRRPP**:

D – Deterrent

R – Reform

R – Retribution

P – Protection

P – punishment

Number one aim – deterrent

Definition: the act or process of discouraging or preventing crimes by instilling fear or doubt by the punishment that the person could face

A perfect example of this would be the instillation of a speed camera on a road – this should deter people from speeding on this road or they will get caught and face a fine



Trying to make people not want to commit crime. If the potential risk of punishment outweighs the benefits of crime, then this may make people less likely to commit crime in the first place

Many Christians feel that deterrence is a **good reason for punishment, because they do not want to live in a dangerous and unstable society full of crime**, so they want to deter people from committing crime

Number two aim – Reform

Definition: when a person reforms, they make changes to their life and character to make themselves a better person and a benefit to society

Some really good examples of how to help a criminal reform would be to give them the opportunity to gain a trade and/or qualifications such as GCSEs in prison which will give them a chance to do something positive with their lives when they come out.



Another really good example would be a restorative justice programme. This is where the criminal gets the chance to meet the victim of their crimes face to face so the criminal can see the damage their crimes have had on the victim – more of this later...

Think back to the Christian beliefs topic – The Parable of the Lost Son (taught by Jesus in Luke 15) tells of a man who takes his inheritance and wastes it – however when his money runs out, he regrets his behaviour and returns home to his family. Because the father (who represents God) accepts him home with open arms, Christians may believe that they should be open to criminals reforming, and should want to accept them back into society

Number three aim – Retribution

Definition: punishment inflicted on someone as vengeance for a wrong or criminal act.

A really good example of retribution as a punishment is someone getting the death penalty for murdering someone. The families of the murder victim can feel that they are getting their retribution on the murderer through the death penalty

Some Christians would agree that retribution is an important aim of punishment because in the Old Testament it teaches: **“eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” (Deuteronomy 19:21)**

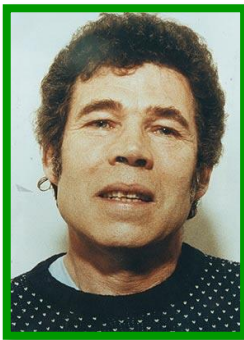
However other Christians believe that retribution is not an appropriate aim for punishment because **Jesus** taught that we should forgive those that sin and do bad things: “**Love your enemies and pray for those that persecute you**” (Matthew 5:39)

Number four aim – Protection

Dangerous criminals should be locked up so they cannot harm anyone else. Society must be protected from dangerous criminals. Christians would believe that this makes us all safer

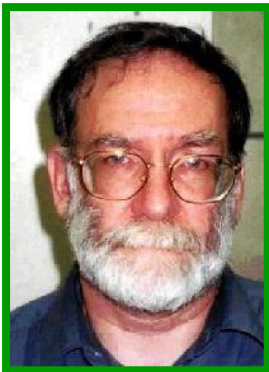
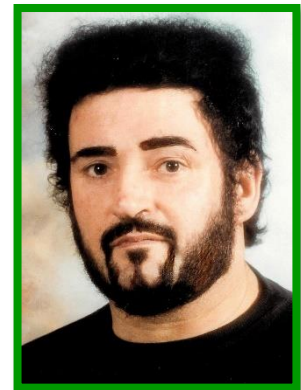
Question to consider:

Would you feel safer if we didn't lock up dangerous people – like below?



Fred West was an English serial killer who committed at least 12 murders between 1967 and 1987 in Gloucestershire, England, the majority with his second wife, Rosemary West. All the victims were young women

Peter Sutcliffe is an English serial killer who was dubbed the "Yorkshire Ripper" by the press. In 1981, Sutcliffe was convicted of murdering thirteen women and attempting to murder seven others



Harold Shipman was a British GP and one of the most prolific serial killers in recorded history who may have killed up to 260 of his patients

Number five aim – punishment

People must see that laws are upheld and respected. Those who break them should be punished to show society will uphold justice.

This sets an example to others so they will not break the law.

Christians believe that there would be chaos in society if people were not punished for their crimes

The aims of punishment in action

What is restorative justice? This is an example of the reform aim of punishment in action:

Story one –

A young offender and the victim of his crime meet face to face. The offender describes why he committed the crime and the circumstances that led him to do so. The victim has the chance to ask him questions in a setting mediated by restorative justice workers. The meeting enables the offender to apologise and offers the chance for the victim to gain some understanding of why he committed the crime.

Story two –

A rape victim has met her attacker in prison to tell him she has forgiven him - and called it a "great" experience to seek "peace and forgiveness together". A spokeswoman for the Restorative Justice Council (RJC) said rape was a particularly sensitive and complex offence to handle with restorative justice, and that it was quite rare for rape victims to meet their attackers.

What is corporal punishment? This is an example of retribution -

Corporal punishment is to use physical pain as a punishment for a criminal act. It deliberately inflicts pain through whipping, branding or amputation (removal of a body part)

“Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them” (Proverbs 26:3)

Because of this quote from the Bible *some* Christians allow and justify physical punishment of children

The treatment of criminals in prison

Facts about prison:

FACT! It costs £60,000 per year to keep someone in a young offender institution

FACT! 47% of prisoners have no qualifications

FACT! In the UK it is estimated that the annual **average cost** for each **prisoner** exceeds £40,000

FACT! 52% of young offenders were permanently excluded from school

FACT! 54% of women prisoners have children under sixteen at home

FACT! Prisons spend on average just £1.96 on each inmate's food daily

FACT! There is one suicide per week in English and Welsh prisons

Some disadvantages and advantages of prisons –

Protection

The public is protected from dangerous people

Retribution

Criminals deserved to go to prison and victims of crimes deserve to get justice

Deterrence

By sending criminals to prison other people might think twice before committing crime

Reform

Prison might help criminals become good people with education, counselling etc

Criminals learn to be better criminals in prisons as they can be seen as 'schools of crime'

Overcrowding

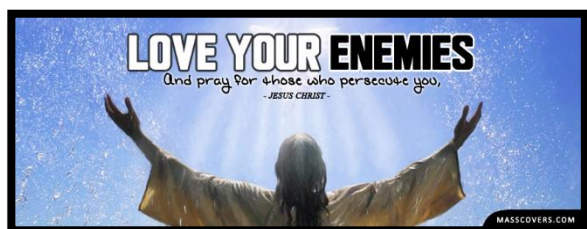
Are there better alternatives?

High suicide rates

Focus on prisons – a Christian response –

One Christian response that prisons should work as a **deterrent** and **retribution**

An alternative Christian viewpoint that prisons should work as a **deterrent** but focus on **reform**



Lord, How Many Times Should I Forgive My Brother?

70 X 7
Matthew 18:21-22

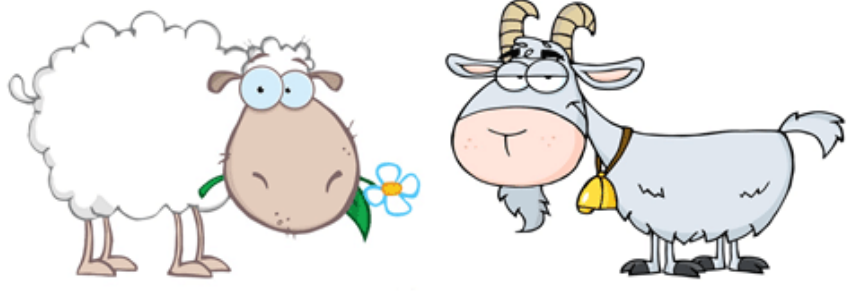


Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

(Bible)

izquotes.com

The Parable of the sheep and the goats



The story of Sodom and Gomorrah shows God punishing the wicked

The story of Noah's Ark shows God punishing the wicked

Should we forgive prisoners?

In the last topic – Religion, Peace and Conflict – we learnt about the importance of forgiveness in Christianity

You will be expected to use these same teachings and explain why some Christians believe it is important to forgive

Jesus once saved a woman's life – she had broken the law and was about to be punished to death – with these famous words –

“Those who have not sinned should throw the first stone”

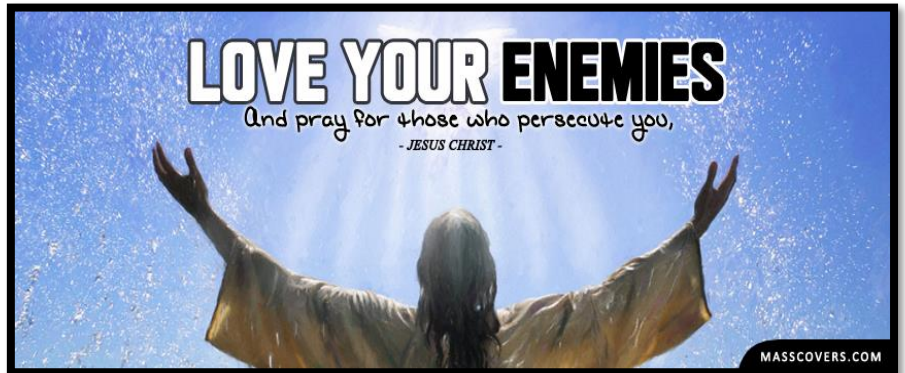
The woman's life was saved because every one of those that held a stone and were about to throw it realised that they themselves had sinned in their lives. Therefore, they realised that it was wrong to judge others as they weren't perfect! This is a story of giving everyone a second chance,



not judging others and forgiving people when they do wrong – your job is to ink this to the treatment of criminals

Christian ideas about forgiveness start with the basic Christian belief that God forgives human beings for things that they have done wrong (called sin), if they ask for forgiveness. The effect of this is that Christians should also forgive others since they try to be like God. Forgiveness can be likened to writing on a white board. When a person is forgiven for something it is wiped clean as if it never happened.

Jesus taught that Christians had to “love your enemies and prey for those who persecute you”. This cannot be easy for anyone to do but it really shows the importance of forgiveness in Christianity



Lord, How Many Times Should I Forgive My Brother?

70 x 7
Matthew 18:21-22

Jesus set an example for forgiving people by his reaction to the people who put him onto the cross to die. Some of his last words were “forgive them Father! They don’t know what they are doing.”

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times.”

Jesus had said that a person should be forgiven 77 times, meaning endlessly!

The Lord’s Prayer

“Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name ...

... Forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors,” Matthew Chapter

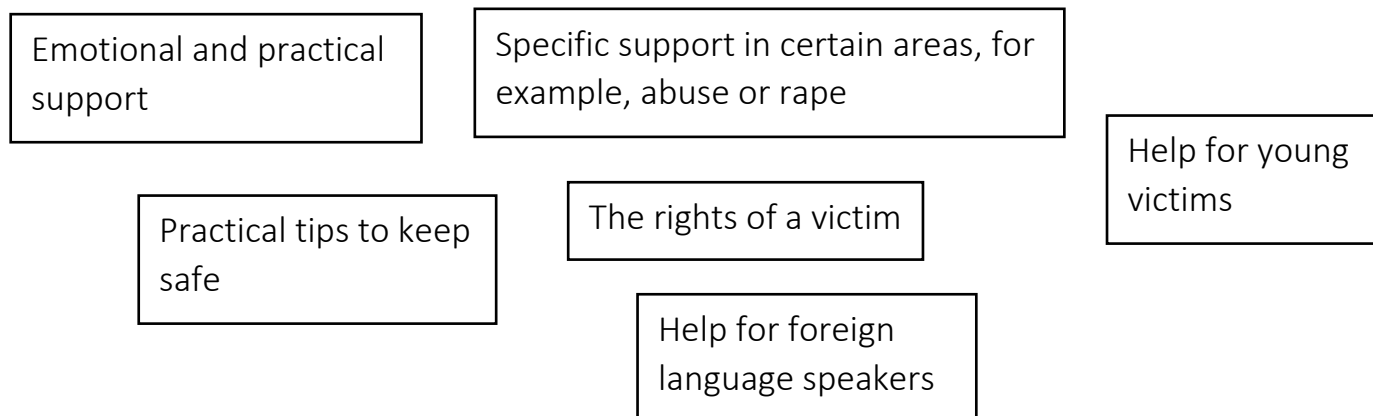
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This means that Christians ask God to forgive them as much as they have forgiven other people



What about the victims of crime?

If you are a victim of a reported crime, then the police may well send you the contact details for 'Victim Support' (www.victimsupport.org.uk). It is offered to overcome the effects of crime. There are six key areas of support available:



The death penalty – capital punishment

140 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice

58 countries retain and use the death penalty

This century **88%** of all known executions have taken place in China, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the USA

In the USA, since 1973, over 130 prisoners on death row have been released after their convictions were overturned

Methods of executions across the world? Does anybody know?

They include:

- ✓ Firing squad
- ✓ Hanging

- ✓ Lethal injection
- ✓ Stoning
- ✓ Beheading
- ✓ Gas chamber
- ✓ Electric chair
- ✓ Crucifixion (Sudan)

In 1977, the USA allowed individual states to choose whether they wished to use capital punishment

Currently, 32 states have re-adopted the death penalty

Texas is responsible for over one-third of all executions that take place

Right now there are over 3000 people awaiting execution in America's death-row cells

Amnesty International has said that the USA is savage, barbaric, cruel, prejudiced and uncivilised - this is because the USA has executed:



- People who have offended as a child
- People who have mental illnesses
- Black people sentenced by all-white juries

Arguments for capital punishment –

1. An 'eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth' means that murderers should pay with their life - retribution
2. It is a deterrent, therefore it puts people off committing terrible crimes
3. Life sentences do not mean life; murderers walk free on average after 16 years – not a proper punishment
4. It is a waste of resources housing criminals for their entire life
5. It is the only way to totally protect society from the worst criminals

Arguments against capital punishment –

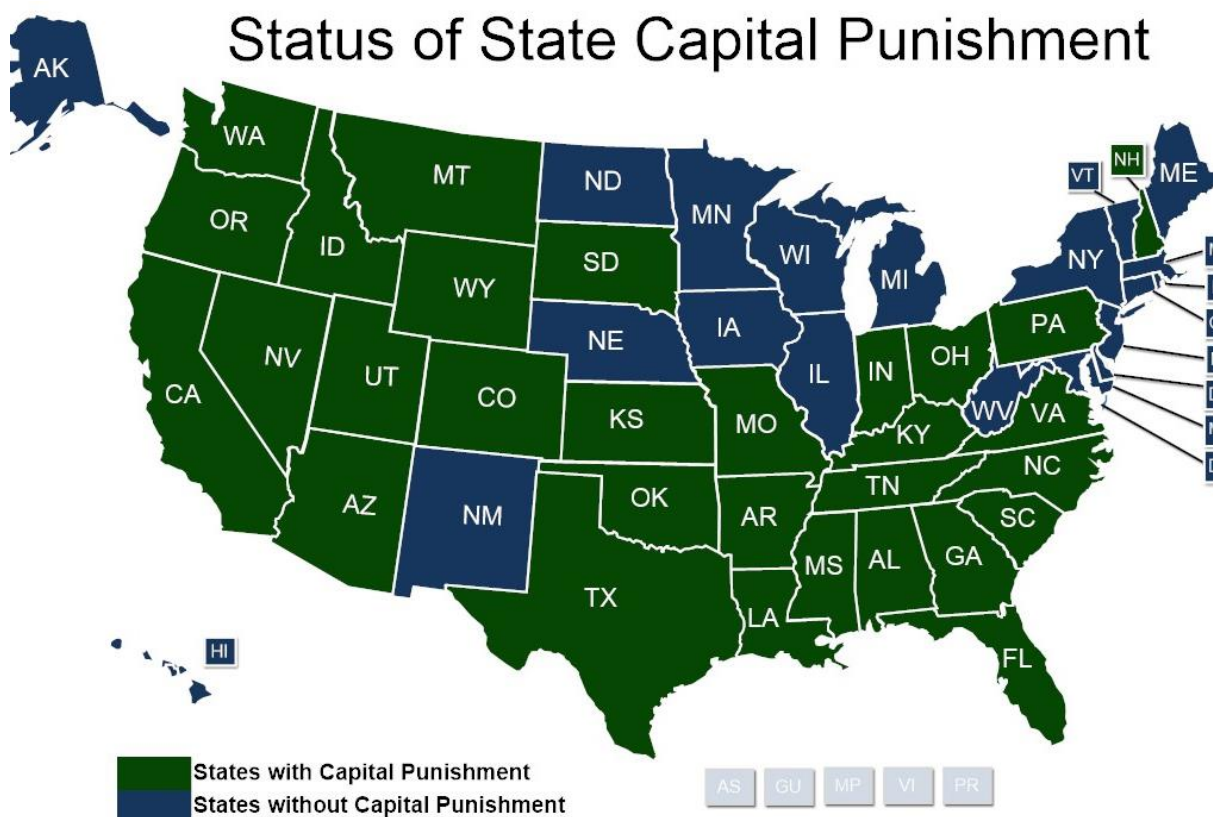
1. Retribution is wrong – two wrongs do not make a right
2. Most murders are done on the spur of the moment, so capital punishment is not a good deterrent

3. Victims' families still grieve; killing the murderer does not end the pain of loss
4. Legal systems can fail and innocent people can be executed
5. All life is sacred and murderers should be given the chance to reform

Do you think that Christians will support or be against the death penalty?

The United States is the biggest Christian country in the world – yet 32 states have the death penalty – so therefore some Christians in the USA must be able to justify using the death penalty on religious and moral grounds

While other Christians – such as the Quaker Church for example – will be completely against the death penalty as they believe it is inhumane and would use religious and moral arguments to support their opinion





The Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32) – what does this teach Christians about forgiveness and repentance?



This is from the story of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). What does this story teach Christians about forgiveness and repentance?

“Those who have not sinned should throw the first stone”

Lord, How Many Times Should I Forgive My Brother?

70 x 7

Matthew 18:21-22

Forgive them brother 70 x 7 times (Jesus – Matthew 18:22) – meaning that a Christian should always be prepared to forgive those who wrong them

Christian believe life in the Sanctity of Life and only God has the right to take life.

 **Love Your Neighbour**

Love your Neighbour – Jesus (Mark 12:30-31) – Christian love (agape) should be shown to all people

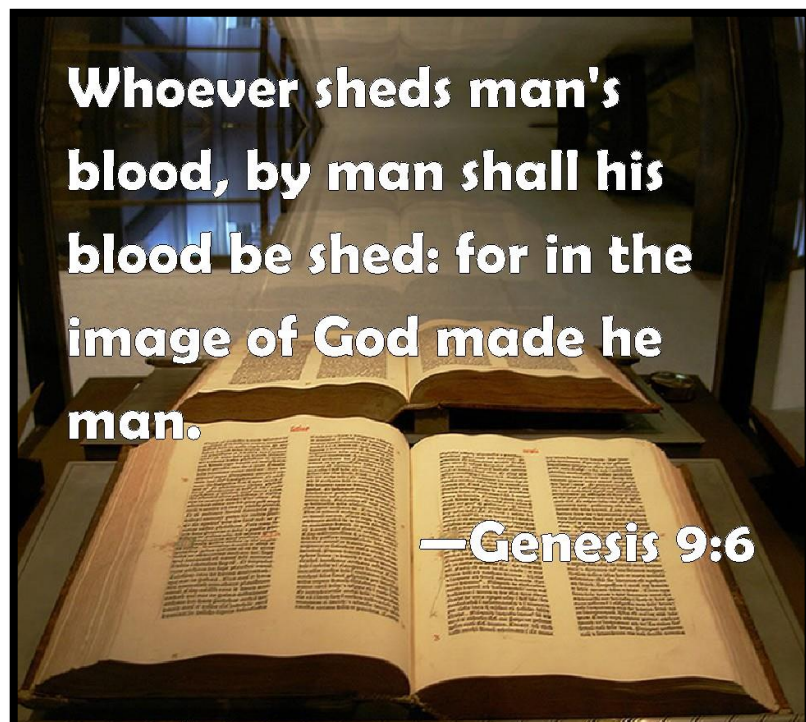
Leviticus 24:20, "fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him."

Some Christians follow the 'eye for an eye' Old Testament teaching which teaches Christians that whoever takes a life should lose their own life

Important Christian leaders such as St Thomas Aquinas have supported capital punishment to preserve the peace of society.

Some Christians believe that the death penalty is the ultimate **retribution** – we should be thinking of the families of those that have lost a loved one to murder and how we would feel if we were them

Some Christians believe that capital punishment is the ultimate **deterrent** and is morally right as it could prevent future terrible crimes from being committed



The Old Testament set capital punishment as a penalty for some crimes. 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed.' Genesis 9:6