

Year 8 Term 1 Knowledge Organiser

How Should We Live?

Key Term	Definition
Ethics	Study of morality
Morality	Standards of right or good conduct/behaviour
Moral Dilemma	a situation where you have to choose between two or more actions
Relative Morality	right or wrong actions are based on the situation.
Absolute Morality	actions are either always right or wrong
Ten Commandments	absolute commands given by God to Moses
Decalogue	Another name for the Ten Commandments
Bible	The holy book for Christians
Sermon on the Mount	Teaching or talk given by Jesus
Parable	A story with a religious/spiritual meaning
Church	Christian community of believers
Situation Ethics	moral decisions based on the most loving thing
Agape	selfless, unconditional love
Conscience	The inner feeling of rightness or wrongness of an action.
Utilitarianism	ethical theory based on producing the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people.
Secular	Non-religious

The Ten Commandments, also known as the **Decalogue** can be found in the book of **Exodus** in the **Bible** (Old Testament). They are believed to have been given to **Moses on Mount Sinai**. They are absolute rules set by God as part His special **Covenant** (relationship/contract) with the Israelites (Jews). The Decalogue are also important in Christianity & Islam.

1. Do not worship others gods.
2. Do not worship idols. (**idolatry**)
3. Do not take God's name in vain. (**blasphemy**)
4. Keep the **Sabbath** day holy.
5. Respect your father and mother.
6. Do not kill
7. Do not commit adultery (have an affair)
8. Do not steal
9. Do not tell lies
10. Do not desire (envy) other people's possessions.



Christian Ethics

Many Christians believe the **Bible** is the **word of God** and contains teachings on how to live. The **Bible has authority from God** about what they should believe and how they should live e.g. it contains laws on how they should act in the **Decalogue**. Jesus' teachings also guide Christians on how to act. The **Sermon on the Mount** is a collection of sayings and **moral teachings from Jesus** found in St Matthew's **Gospel** in the New Testament. In them he stresses sincere devotion to God and love towards others. It is in the Sermon you can find the **Lord's Prayer**, **Jesus' Greatest Commandment** and the **Beatitudes**. The Bible also has teachings of other Christian leaders such as **St Paul**.

Christians will also look to the **Church** for help and advice when making moral decisions. Christians can be helped by the Church by talking to other Christians, praying and worshipping together and listening to the priest or vicar. The Church provides rules which everyone can follow and it is believed that God speaks to people through the Church. For **Roman Catholics** the Church alongside the Bible has real authority. For the **Church of England**, the Bible is the most important guide. The leader of the Church of England is the **Archbishop of Canterbury** and the **Pope** is the head of the Catholic Church.

Some Christians believe their conscience is given by God and is the most important and final part of moral decision making after consulting the Bible and the Church.



Watch again/ Further Research

[Jesus' teachings](#)

[How do Christians know right from wrong Video clip](#)



Situation Ethics is a Christian approach to making moral decisions created by an American minister **Joseph Fletcher** during the 1960s. He said that following absolute rules was too demanding and not always helpful in particular situations. Therefore Christians should follow one main principle or rule which is based on **agape** or love to bring about a good action **Love should be the only consideration when making moral decisions**. A person should only obey the rules of the Bible or teaching from the Church if it results in the most loving action. Situation Ethics puts people first, the most loving thing will depend on the situation which makes it **relative**.

Christians might use situation ethics because it's similar to the **Golden Rule** and Jesus himself seemed to use situation ethics when he broke the Sabbath Day rules and healed people. Some Christians would not be happy using Situation Ethics because it might result in immoral actions which go against the teachings of the Bible or Church e.g. lying or killing in the name of love.



Utilitarianism – a secular theory

This ethical theory argues that something is good or bad according to its benefit for the majority of people. This is known as the **Principle of Utility** or the Greatest Happiness Principle

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1833) did not believe morality was based on the authority of God. He believed that:

Happiness = Pleasure – Pain

Bentham created the **Hedonic Calculus** as a way of measuring pleasure and therefore calculating or working out the consequence of an action. It measures the quantity.

There are 7 parts:

Purity – it is not followed by pain

Remoteness – how near or far is the pleasure – the nearer the better

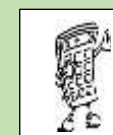
Extent – how universal is the pleasure, how many will be affected?

Duration – how long will the pleasure last?

Intensity – how deep is the pleasure – the more intense the better!

Certainty – how certain or uncertain is the pleasure?

To be followed by ... will it produce more pleasure?



Quotes:

Jeremy Bentham: "nature has placed man under two masters, pain and pleasure".

Jesus: "**do unto others what you would have them done to you...**" (Matthew 7:12)

Jesus: "**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God**". Matthew 5:9

Jesus: "**Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath made for man**".

Joseph Fletcher: "**The morality of an action depends on the situation**".

Martin Luther King: "**There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.**"

