

# Theme E

## Religion, Crime and Punishment

**Key terms:**

- **Crime** an offence that is punishable by law, for example stealing and murder
- **Punishment** something legally done to somebody as a result of being found guilty of breaking the law

**Causes of Crime**

**Social Reasons**

1. Most criminals have been excluded from school
2. Abusive parents are poor role models
3. Boredom leads to crime

**Environmental Reasons**

1. High unemployment
2. Gang rivalry has created knife crime culture
3. Poor housing and deprived background can lead to crime

**Drug Addiction**

1. Highest single cause of crime
2. Commit crime to fund habit
3. Much gang crime is drug related

**Psychological reasons**



<p><i>Christians believe in JUSTICE so if we have to break the law to get justice, this might be seen as ok</i></p>	<p><i>The 10 Commandments say 'Do not covet' which means do not be greedy!</i></p>
<p><i>Christians don't forbid drinking BUT they would say that drinking TOO MUCH is wrong (your body is a mirror image of God)</i></p>	<p><i>Christians think stealing is wrong BUT they think we need to make sure no one is poor so they don't need to steal</i></p>

1. Criminologists suggest most prisoners are suffering from mental health issues
2. Violence of TV could influence people to copy it.
3. Advertising may encourage people to be selfish and greedy.

**Aims of Punishment:**

# Types of Punishment: Corporal Punishment, Community Service

## Religious beliefs on Punishment:

'If there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand....' (Exodus, Old Testament)

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5, New Testament)

'Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something good. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.' (Romans, New Testament)

## Corporal punishment

- This is punishment by causing pain. Usually hitting (caning or whipping), sometimes branding or amputation.
- Banned in 1987, but a Christian school in 2005 wanted to bring it back

## Does corporal punishment fulfil the aims of punishment?

### **Deterrent?**

Yes: some people would not commit crimes if they knew they would be physically punished.

No - school children were still naughty when it was used, didn't put them off.

It can make criminals 'more hardened', once it's happened once, the fear might disappear

### **Reformation**

Yes - someone might learn a lesson from a physical punishment and it may teach them right from wrong.

No - this is more about hurting an offender than teaching them to be a better person

### **Retribution**

Yes - the victim or society may feel like they want to see the offender suffer for the crime they committed.

No—it can never truly 'make up' for the crime committed

## Religious Beliefs on Corporal Punishment:

### **Christian views about Corporal punishment**

-it's against Jesus' teachings of 'love thy neighbour'

-No Christian country in the developed world uses it to punish criminals

-It goes against the 'sanctity of life' because it causes damage

+ 'eye for an eye'

### **Islamic views about corporal punishment**

-'law of compensation' means that criminals can pay a fine instead of being beaten.

## Religious Beliefs on Community Service

Good for minor offences because it allows REFORM

HELPS them 'make up' for what they've done'

C of E said it was a good thing as it helps with drug problems/ medical issues and gives education and counselling too.

Better than locking people up

Hear the victim's side - love thy neighbour.

## Community Service

Crimes such as minor assault, benefit fraud, vandalism might be punishable by Community Service. This offers offenders a chance to make up for what they have done and receive help in reforming their behaviour.

# Types of Punishment: Prison and Capital Punishment

## Prison:

Prison is reserved for those who have committed serious crimes. The punishment is the loss of your freedom. Prisoners have no choice over any aspects of their days, like ordinary people do.



## Religious Beliefs on Prison:

### *Christians:*

*+ accept it for serious offences*

*+ want it to be used to educate and REFORM prisoners*

*+ Want them to get support, counselling, drug therapies, education while inside.*

### *Muslims:*

*Used differently in countries with Shari'ah law*

*Less of a focus on reform*

## Capital Punishment (Death Penalty)

### **Death Penalty**

Capital punishment; a form of punishment in which a prisoner is put to death for crimes committed.

Although the death penalty was abolished in the UK in 1965, it has played a huge part in the history of our criminal justice system.

### **Forms of capital punishment today...**

- Lethal injection
- Electric chair
- Gas chamber
- Death by firing squad
- Hanging
- Stoning

Some Christians support capital punishment. They quote the Old Testament "an eye for an eye". So if you kill someone you should be killed.

Some life prisoners ask to die rather than being kept in solitary confinement for their own safety. Many Christians say its not humane to be forced to be on your own so death is preferable.

Muslims believe that even though the death penalty is allowed, forgiveness is preferable.

# Capital Punishment

## Christian beliefs on Capital Punishment:

"You shall not kill."  
(Old Testament, Ten commandments)

"Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth."  
(Old Testament Exodus)

## Muslim beliefs on Capital Punishment:

"Do not take life, which God has made sacred."  
Qur'an 8:151

"Do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden except for the requirements of justice."  
Qur'an6:161

## Forgiveness

Showing mercy, and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong.

### Forgiveness in religion

Forgiveness and compassion for those who have done wrong is a central concept in most religions around the world, particularly in Christianity and Islam.

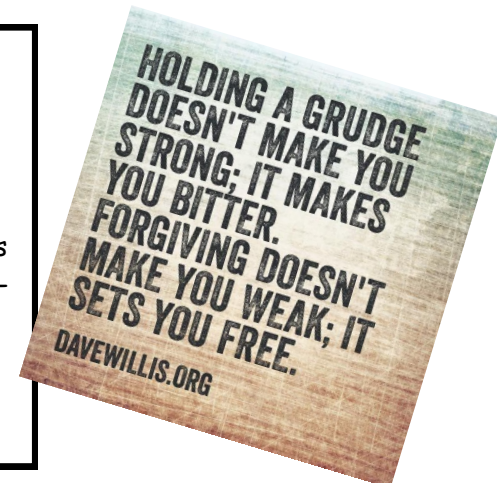
Jesus constantly shocked those around him by offering forgiveness to people that had been shunned and rejected by society due to their actions, so long as they changed their ways. He even forgave those nailing him on to the cross!

Christians believe that they should live like Jesus and try to do the same.



"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us." (The Lords Prayer)

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my Brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus Answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" Matthew)



# Suffering

## Attitudes to suffering

For many people, suffering is an unfortunate part of life. This may be caused by natural events such as illness, or it may be caused by the actions of people.

Christians believe they should try to help whenever they can.

Christians feel they should follow the example of Jesus, who helped many whom he saw suffer. Some examples of people that Jesus helped who were suffering are:

- The Paralysed man
- The Blind man
- The man with leprosy

*'We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others'*  
*Helen Keller,*

## How can suffering be a good thing?

'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger..'  
'It's character building..'

These statements both refer to the idea that sometimes suffering, or going through a hard time, can be a good thing in the end. This is because we learn about ourselves and learn how to cope with difficult times.

St Paul suffered at the hands of the Romans and was abused by them for being a Christian.

He said this:

*'We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, character and hope' (New Testament, Romans)*

## Free Will

Christians believe:

• God gave us all **free will**- the free choice to make our own decisions - and therefore if we make bad choices, we can end up causing ourselves or others to suffer.



## What happens when we make the wrong choices and cause someone to suffer?

Be honest with yourself, to others and to God and work to repair the damage you have

