



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Leaving Certificate Examination 2026

Religious Education

Ordinary Level

Tuesday 23 June Afternoon 2:00 – 4:00

Total Marks 320

General Directions for Candidates

Candidates must answer the following —

- **One** Question from Unit One
- **Two** Sections from Unit Two
- **One** Section from Unit Three

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Unit One

You must answer parts (a) and (b) from **one** of the following three questions.

(All questions carry 80 marks each)

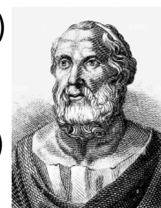
Section A The Search for Meaning and Values (80 marks)

Question 1 The Tradition of Search

Answer (a) and (b).

(a) (i) Outline **one** philosophical idea put forward by Plato in ancient Greece. (20)

(ii) Describe how an idea put forward by Plato played a role in the development of philosophy. (20)



(b) *Finding the goal and purpose of life can be challenging for people today.*

Explain **two** ways that living in the world today can make it difficult for people to find the goal and purpose of life. (40)

Question 2 The Tradition of the Response

Answer (a) and (b).

(a) Profile how the religious beliefs of people who lived in an ancient society can be seen in an example from **each** of the following:

- Rites of Initiation
- Sacred Art/Artefacts (40)

(b) Describe **two** examples of how a sense of the sacred can be seen as important in the lives of people today. (40)

Question 3 Concepts of God

Answer (a) and (b).

(a) Outline a similarity and a difference in the understanding of God found in **two** of the following religions:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism (40)

(b) Examine how the understanding of God/gods/the transcendent found in the teaching of **one** of the following religions influences its members to act in a moral way:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism (40)

Unit Two

You must answer **two** of the following three sections.

(All sections carry 80 marks each)

Section B Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions (80 marks)

Answer any two of parts: (a), (b), (c).

- (a) Explain the reason why returning to the original teaching of Jesus was important for **two** of the following movements:
- Céili Dé ● Early 19th century Protestantism ● Liberation Theology
 - Luther ● The Mendicant Orders ● The Second Vatican Council (40)
- (b) Evaluate the evidence for the existence of Jesus of Nazareth found in **two** of the sources listed below:
- An Evangelist – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John ● Josephus ● Saint Paul (40)
- (c) Discuss the impact of the resurrection of Jesus on the first disciples in relation to **two** of the following:
- A new understanding of Jesus ● Awareness of Community ● Sense of Mission (40)

Section C World Religions (80 marks)

Answer any two of parts: (a), (b), (c).

- (a) *The most recent 2022 Census shows an increase in the number of religions found in Ireland today.*
Describe **two** other trends found in religion in Ireland today. (40)
- (b) Choose **one** religion from List A and **one** religion from list B below:
List A: ● Christianity ● Judaism List B: ● Buddhism ● Hinduism ● Islam
Compare the way the founding story is recalled in a ceremony or festival by members today in **each** of the religions you have chosen. (40)
- (c) Examine how community can play an important role for members today in **two** of the following religions:
- Buddhism ● Christianity ● Hinduism ● Islam ● Judaism (40)

Section D Moral Decision-Making (80 marks)

Answer any two of parts: (a), (b), (c).

- (a) Outline the understanding of what is right and wrong that is put forward in **two** of the following theories:
- Deontological Ethics ● Hedonism ● Natural Law
 - Teleological Ethics ● Utilitarianism ● Virtue Ethics (40)
- (b) Examine how a morally mature person would approach deciding what is right and wrong on **one** of the following issues:
- Crime & Punishment ● Medical Ethics ● Politics & Economics
 - Relationships & Sexuality ● Violence & War (40)
- (c) Describe an example of how people who lived in **each** of the following ancient civilisations were concerned about moral issues: ● The Hebrews ● The Romans (40)



Unit Three

You must answer **one** of the following four sections.

(All sections carry 80 marks each)

Section E Religion and Gender

(80 marks)

Answer part (a) or (b).

- (a) Describe the impact on the changing roles of men and women in society today gained from **two** of following:

● Biology ● Philosophy ● Psychology ● Sociology

(80)



or

- (b) (i) Examine the role played by men and women today in **two** of the following religions:

● Buddhism ● Christianity ● Hinduism ● Islam ● Judaism

(40)

- (ii) Choose **one** woman from any of the categories below and profile how she contributed to the development of her religious tradition:

● Founders & Reformers of Religious Orders ● Religious Writers

● Social Reformers ● Spiritual Thinkers

(40)

Section F Issues of Justice and Peace

(80 marks)

Answer part (a) or (b).

- (a) (i) Outline **two** ideas put forward by a commentator on religion and the environment about the need to care for the earth.

(40)

- (ii) ● Cultural ● Economic ● Political ● Social

Profile how **two** of the above structural causes have contributed to **one** of the following issues in society:

● Discrimination in Ireland ● Poverty in Ireland ● World Hunger

(40)

or

- (b) Describe how the teaching of a major world religion can be seen in **two** key principles of the 'Just War' theory.

(80)

Section G Worship, Prayer and Ritual

(80 marks)

Answer part (a) or (b).

- (a) (i) Explain the importance of the role reflection plays in the religious experience of young people today. (40)
- (ii) Examine the role that symbol plays in the way 'sacrament' is celebrated within **two** Christian denominations. (40)

or

- (b) Describe how religious belief is expressed through the features that mark a space as sacred in **two** of the following religions:
- Buddhism ● Christianity ● Hinduism ● Islam ● Judaism (80)

Section H The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text

(80 marks)

Answer part (a) or (b).



- (a) (i) Describe **two** examples of how the Bible has had an influence on **one** of the following:
- Famous Speeches ● The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (40)
- (ii) Profile how the evangelist and his community influenced how **two** of the following Gospels came to be written:
- The Gospel of John ● The Gospel of Luke
● The Gospel of Mark ● The Gospel of Matthew (40)

or

- (b) (i) Profile the impact that **two** of the following parables had on the followers of Jesus at the time when he first told them:
- The Labourers in the Vineyard. Matthew 20:1-16
● The Sower. Matthew 13:1-9
● The Ten Wedding Attendants. Matthew 25:1-13
● The Unjust steward. Luke 16:1-13 (40)
- (ii) Discuss the implications that **two** of the above parables may have on Christians today. (40)

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Acknowledgements

Images

- Image on page 2: Picture: <https://www.alamy.com/plato-ancient-greek-philosopher-image245868903.html>
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