4.2: Sanctity of Life

What is sanctity of life?

- Very important belief when discussing moral issues such as murder, crime, global warming, abortion, human rights.
- It means life is sacred/holy.
- God has a special relationship with humans because we are made in his image and have responsibility over the world.
- Human life must be treated with care.
- Human life is intrinsically valuable – this means we are valuable because we are created by God.
- Humans are not perfect – why? Original sin. But we are still like God and should treat each other with respect and dignity.

Why is the sanctity of life important today?

1. It shows God cares for humans. This relationship with God was made possible because of the death and resurrection
2. It shows that all humans are equal because God loves all people. It teaches we should treat people with love and respect.
3. It teaches us that decisions about life and death are very important and should be taken seriously.
4. It teaches that human life is sacred from conception

Task 2: Can these reasons be important for non-religious people?

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Task 1: Answer the question in the image...

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What does the Bible teach about the value of human life?

**Task 3:** Below are four bible quotes - decide what they may teach Christians about the importance of human life.

‘So God created mankind in his own image.’ (Genesis 1) I think this shows the value of human life because...

‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.’ (Jeremiah 1) I think this shows the value of human life because...

‘For you created my innermost being, you knit me together in my mother’s womb.’ (Psalm 139) I think this shows the value of human life because...

‘Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?’ (1 Corinthians) I think this shows the value of human life because...

**Challenge:** – What does this mean? How is it different from the first quote?

‘Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.’ (Genesis 2)
Killing in self defence

Most Christians would say that it is legitimate to take the life of someone attacking you if that is the only way to protect your own life.

- The sanctity of one’s own life takes precedence over the sanctity of other people’s lives.

‘Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one’s own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow.’

_Catechism of the Catholic Church_

Task 4: If human life is sacred, what are Christians allowed to do if they are attacked?

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Killing in war

- Wars inevitably involve taking life.
- Some Christians believe that the sanctity of life means they should never fight in wars – pacifism: refusing to fight in wars and there are many Christian pacifists’ groups: Pax Christi, Quakers, Plymouth Brethan etc.

‘You have heard that it was said. ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.’

Matthew 5:43-44

- Most Christians believe that they can fight in just wars because the need to protect the innocent from aggressors justifies breaking the sanctity of life.

‘Legitimate defence can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defence of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm.’

Task 5: How does fighting in wars fit with belief in the sanctity of life?

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Task 6: Summarise it!

✓ Produce FIVE key points which summarise ‘Sanctity of Life’ learning

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SUMmarise It

S_horter than the text
U_se your own words
M ain ideas only