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GCSE

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

Paper 2B Perspectives on faith (textual studies)  
Report on the Examination

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## **General Comments**

Schools and colleges are to be congratulated for the way in which their students were prepared for the examination. From the many responses examined it was evident that the Specification content was well taught and that students seemed to be at ease with the demands of the new style of questioning. The larger schools and colleges showed that the full range of ability was entered. The question paper appears to have been accessible to all students as there were very few blank spaces and most students were able to attempt all questions. Any blank spaces were generally AO1:1 questions (01.2 and 02.2) which suggested that the students did not know the set texts. This was also evident in some AO2 responses where students failed to develop their answers or make references to Mark's Gospel. On the other hand there were some excellent, well developed AO1 and AO2 responses which showed good knowledge and understanding of Mark's Gospel.

## **Theme D: St Mark's Gospel – the Life of Jesus**

### **Question 01.1**

This question was correctly answered by most students.

### **Question 01.2**

This question was generally answered correctly with most responses gaining two marks for two correct statements. Some students either did not know the story and left the lines blank or gave incorrect responses.

### **Question 01.3**

This question was generally well answered with most students able to explain two contrasting views about the healing. Many explained that the girl was dead and that Jesus worked a miracle and brought her back to life. Some explained that as Jesus was the Son of God he had the power to work miracles as anything is possible for God. Contrasting views explained that Jesus said the girl was not dead, she was only sleeping and that Jesus just woke her up. Others explained that it is scientifically impossible to bring someone back from the dead and that the girl was just unconscious. Some responses suggested that the girl could have been suffering from anorexia and that Jesus simply made her better rather than raising her from the dead. They linked this to the statement of Jesus to 'give her something to eat'.

### **Question 01.4**

This question was exceptionally well answered with most responses achieving full marks. The most common responses explained that Jesus 'died for our sins' and his death is what brought people back to God, and that it was part of God's plan and Jesus was obedient to his father's will. Responses supported this with references to 'Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45) and 'not what I will but what you will' (Mark 14:36). Other responses explained that through Jesus' death a new relationship was formed between God and man and referred to the tearing of the curtain in the Temple (Mark 15:38). Many explained how Jesus suffered on the cross as a human being and referred to Jesus calling out in anguish to his Father 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani' (Mark 15:34) and that he was also divine when the centurion said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God' (Mark 15:39). Good knowledge and understanding of the importance of the death of Jesus was evident in the responses which made relevant references to Mark's Gospel.

**Question 01.5**

This question was particularly well answered. Many responses showed good understanding of the importance of the conversation at Caesarea Philippi and managed to link up the disciples' level of understanding with events that transpired later. Many arguments in support of the statement included: the disciples not challenging what Jesus said; that they appeared to have accepted Jesus' view on his role when he predicted his suffering and death and were willing to share in his hardships; and that they followed Jesus to Jerusalem without question and kept the Messianic secret. Arguments in support of other views included: Peter challenging Jesus about the role of the Messiah; James and John looking for the best seats at the celebration banquet; the disciples falling asleep in the garden of Gethsemane; Peter's denial of knowing Jesus; and the disciples running away at the arrest of Jesus and going into hiding. However, many responses were able to present a justified conclusion and referred to the fact that the disciples gave up everything to follow Jesus and that Jesus recognised their human frailties eg he forgave Peter and he visited the disciples in the upper room and trusted them to 'Go throughout the whole world and preach the good news' (the Commission, Mark 16:15). Many responses explained that the disciples did as Jesus asked of them and accepted their fate which shows that they understood the importance of the conversation with Jesus at Caesarea Philippi. Weaker responses simply retold the story with little or no explanation given of its importance to the disciples.

**Theme E: St Mark's Gospel as a source of spiritual truth****Question 02.1**

This question was correctly answered by most students.

**Question 02.2**

This question was generally answered correctly with most students gaining two marks for two correct statements. Some students either did not know the story and left the lines blank or gave incorrect responses which generally referred to the Commission.

**Question 02.3**

This question was generally well answered. Students were able to give two contrasting views about Jesus' reply. The most common responses explained that Jesus' harsh reply to the woman was to test her faith and when he saw how strong her faith was he healed her daughter. A contrasting view was that Jesus' mission was primarily for the Jews and Jesus seemed to be saying that the Jews should not mix with Gentiles. Very good knowledge and understanding of the story was evident. Weaker responses confused the story with Jairus' daughter.

**Question 02.4**

This question was very well answered with relevant references to Mark's Gospel. Many referred to the call of the disciples, the immediate response of the first four and the disciples giving up everything to follow Jesus. Others referred to the cost of discipleship – no place for self-interest, may have to face rejection, suffering and death. Many made reference to the rich young man and the problems of putting materialistic comfort before God. Others referred to the Woman with the haemorrhage story and Blind Bartimaeus about the importance of faith or the lack of it in Peter's denials. Many also explained the rewards of discipleship (Mark 10: 29-31). Students supported

their responses with relevant quotes from Mark's Gospel. Credit was not given for any reference made to the parable of the sheep and the goats from Matthew's Gospel.

### **Question 02.5**

This question was generally well answered with most responses achieving Level 3 and above. Arguments in support of the statement explained that there was too much evil in the world for the Kingdom of God to exist eg violence, hatred and discrimination. Many explained that some people are too concerned with power, materialistic comforts, image and status and don't show love of God or neighbour. Some referred to parables like the growing seed which refers to a future Kingdom on Judgement Day or the story of Jesus and the children which also implies a Kingdom which is still to come. Arguments in support of other views explained that the Kingdom of God came to earth with Jesus and is a present reality. They made reference to the growth of the Kingdom in the parable of the mustard seed and how people respond to God's message and allow it to flourish in the parable of the sower. Many explained that there are signs that the Kingdom of God is present on earth eg where people are doing good and helping others e.g. charities like CAFOD. Some excellent responses reached a justified conclusion stating that the Kingdom of God is a present reality though not all are quite ready for it eg Jesus told the scribe that he was not far from the Kingdom of God in the greatest commandment. Weaker responses lacked development and made no reference to Mark's Gospel or gave a one-sided response which cannot achieve higher than Level 2. Some students appeared to run out of time.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.