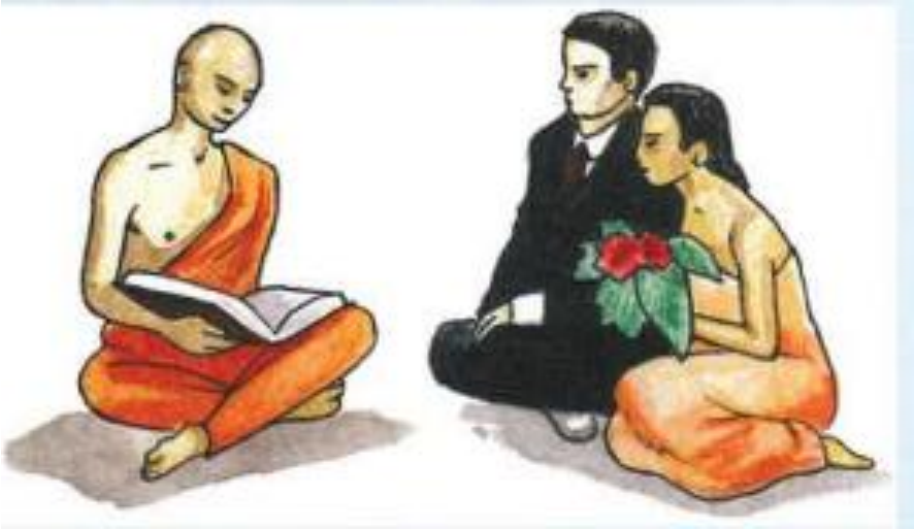


Family and Relationships



Relationships and family keywords

- ❑ **Human sexuality:** refers to how people express themselves as sexual beings.
- ❑ **Heterosexual:** relationships between a man and a woman.
- ❑ **Homosexual:** relationships between members of the same sex.
- ❑ **Sex before marriage:** is sex between two unmarried people
- ❑ **Sex outside of marriage:** sex between two people where one or both of them are married to someone else. This is called adultery.
- ❑ **Adultery:** sex between two people where one or both of them are married to someone else. In **John 8** Jesus ordered a woman guilty of adultery to leave her life of sin. **Exodus 20** teaches you shall not commit adultery.
- ❑ **Contraception:** refers to methods used to prevent pregnancy taking place. **Aquinas' Natural Law theory** advises against the use of contraception.
- ❑ **Family planning:** controlling how many children couples have and when they have them.
- ❑ **Marriage:** is a legal union between man and a woman. In some countries such as UK two people of the same sex can take part in this legal union.
- ❑ **Same sex marriage:** legal union between two people of the same sex.
- ❑ **Cohabitation:** refers to a couple living together and having a sexual relationship without being married.
- ❑ **Common law marriage:** this refers to a couple living together as boyfriend and girlfriend and having a sexual relationship without being legally married.
- ❑ **Divorce:** legal ending of a marriage. This can only take place after a year.
- ❑ **Remarriage:** when someone marries again whilst their former husband or wife is still alive.
- ❑ **Families:** people related by blood, marriage or adoption.
- ❑ **Procreation:** bringing babies into the world.
- ❑ **Gender equality:** means men and woman should be given the same rights and opportunities as each other.
- ❑ **Gender prejudice:** holding biased opinions about people based on their gender.
- ❑ **Sexual stereotyping:** have a fixed idea or image of how men and women will behave.
- ❑ **Gender discrimination:** treating or acting against someone differently because of their gender.

Human sexuality

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Attitudes to sexual relationships

	Christianity	Buddhism and other views
General attitudes towards sexual relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Christian Church teaches that sex expresses a deep, loving, life-long union that first requires the commitment of marriage. Not all Christians agree with this, but all are against unfaithfulness. The Bible teaches that heterosexual relationships are part of God's plan for humans. Genesis 1:28 and 2:24 say that a man and woman should be united together and 'increase in number'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddhism does not favour one form of sexuality over another, or teach that sex before marriage is wrong. For Buddhists the most important principle is to not harm others through sexual activity. <p>“There is a middle way wherein sexuality is fully acknowledged and regarded compassionately without the need to indulge in actions which lead to suffering.” <i>Daishin Morgan</i></p>
Views on homosexual relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some Christians oppose homosexual relationships because they believe this goes against God's plan. The Catholic Church teaches that homosexual sex is a sinful activity. <p>“Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.” <i>Leviticus 18:22 [NIV]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Church of England welcomes homosexuals living in committed relationships, but does not allow same-sex marriage in church. Some other Churches do. Some Christians think loving, faithful homosexual relationships are just as holy as heterosexual ones. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddhist teachings do not oppose homosexual relationships or marriage. Many Buddhists believe homosexual relationships are not morally different from heterosexual relationships. It is important there is consent and respect regardless of the gender of the people involved. Many people in Britain today believe homosexuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals. This is reflected in the fact that same-sex marriage is now legal in the UK (although same-sex couples are not allowed to get married in many churches).

Sexual relationships before marriage

Christian views	Buddhist views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For many Christians, sex expresses a deep, lifelong union that requires the commitment of marriage. It should not be a casual, temporary pleasure. Anglican and Catholic Churches teach that sex before marriage is wrong. Some liberal Christians think sex before marriage can be a valid expression of love, particularly if the couple are intending to get married or have a life-long commitment. Christians believe it is wrong to use people for sex, to spread sexually transmitted infections or to risk pregnancy outside of marriage. <p>“Flee from sexual immorality.” <i>1 Corinthians 6:18 [NIV]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buddhism teaches that sex before marriage is acceptable, and no less moral than sex after marriage. What is wrong is to cause harm to others through sex. Some Buddhists wait until marriage to have sex, but this is likely to be for personal rather than religious reasons, and influenced by local, cultural practices. <p>You might be asked to compare beliefs on sexual relationships before marriage between Christianity (the main religious tradition in Great Britain) and another religious tradition.</p>

Sexual relationships outside of marriage

Christian views	Buddhist views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christians are against adultery as it breaks the marriage vows they make before God, and threatens the stable relationship needed for their children's security. Jesus once forgave a woman caught committing adultery, but ordered her to leave her life of sin (John 8:1-11). Adultery is forbidden in one of the Ten Commandments. <p>“You shall not commit adultery.” <i>Exodus 20:14 [NIV]</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Buddhists would say that adultery is unskillful because it involves deceit and is also likely to cause harm. <p>TIP See page 75 for a reminder of the difference between skilful and unskillful actions.</p> 

Contraception and family planning

Religious and non religious attitudes to contraception

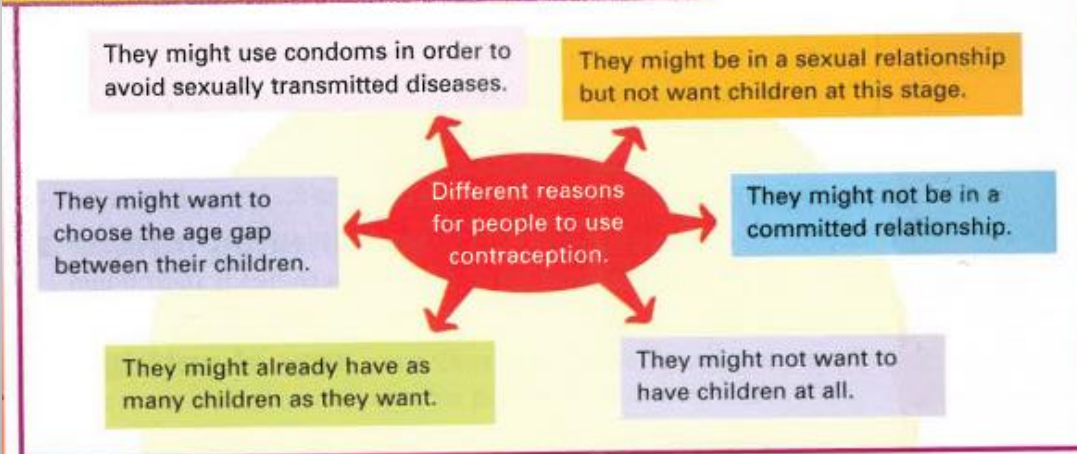
Group	Beliefs	Favoured methods
Catholics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial contraception goes against natural law and the purpose of marriage. Sex should always be open to creating new life. Family planning should only involve natural methods of contraception. 	The rhythm method (avoiding sex at fertile times of the month).
Anglicans and Non-conformists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contraception is allowed for couples to develop their relationship before having children, to space out pregnancies, to avoid harming the mother's health, or to limit the number of children in a family so they can all be cared for. In 1930 the Church of England approved artificial contraception used 'in the light of Christian principles'. Christians who believe life begins at the moment of conception are against methods that prevent the fertilised egg from developing, as this is seen as causing an abortion and a form of murder. 	A preference among some for contraception that prevents conception from taking place.
Buddhists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Buddhists believe it is acceptable to use contraception that prevents conception. Some believe contraception that prevents a fertilised egg from developing is a form of killing and breaks the first moral precept, so is not acceptable. However they might make exceptions, e.g. if the birth threatens the mother's life, or if she would struggle to care for the child. Having children is not considered an obligation; it may even be considered better not to have children if one wants to lead a spiritual life. 	A preference among some for contraception that prevents conception from taking place.
Non-religious people in British society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is widespread acceptance of artificial contraception to help family planning. Many people think it is responsible to use contraception to prevent unwanted pregnancies, control population growth, and prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. 	Any type of contraception.

- ❑ **Contraception:** refers to methods used to prevent pregnancy taking place. **Aquinas' Natural Law theory** advises against the use of contraception because a primary role of humans is to reproduce.
- ❑ **Family planning:** controlling how many children couples have and when they have them.

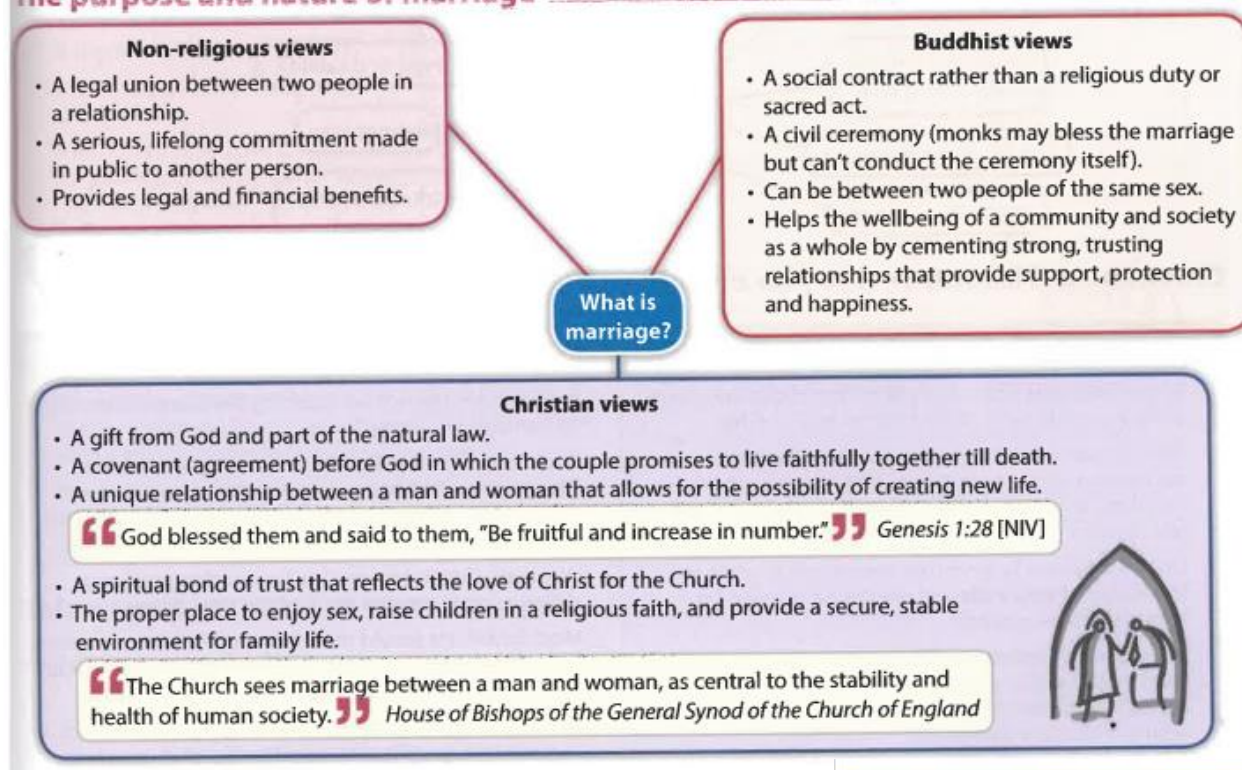
The **Roman Catholic Church** believes people should not interfere with **Natural Law**; it teaches that God made sex for the purpose of **reproduction**, and people should not go against God's purposes. Roman Catholics usually believe only natural methods of contraception are acceptable, but there should always be the possibility of pregnancy, in case God plans for a child to be born.

The **Church of England** and the **Methodist Church** teach that contraception is an acceptable way of preventing unwanted pregnancies. These churches encourage people to make **responsible choices** about the size of families. Many other churches agree with this too.

Why do people use contraception?



Marriage



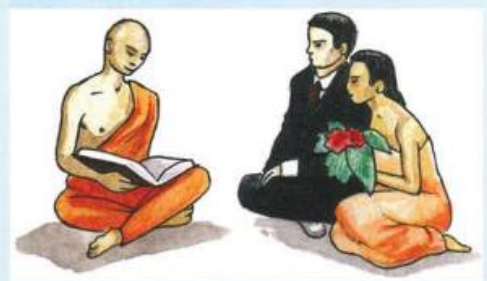
Buddhism

Buddhist wedding

Buddhism does not have a set ceremony for marriage, so the ceremonies are completely non-religious.

A couple will visit a monk to have their fortunes read and a lucky date is decided from that reading for their wedding.

Buddhists will follow the local customs of their country for marriage, which may include registering their marriage officially.



Later, the couple might visit the monastery or temple to invite a monk to bless their marriage. He does this by reciting verses from Buddhist scriptures. He also gives them advice about being a married Buddhist.

The couple might then invite the monk to a feast, as a sign of their thanks for his blessing.

- ❑ **Cohabitation:** refers to a couple living together and having a sexual relationship without being married.
- ❑ **Common law marriage:** this refers to a couple living together as boyfriend and girlfriend and having a sexual relationship without being legally married.

Christianity

Christian wedding

Marriage is a sacrament in some Christian traditions; it brings a blessing from God. In the Roman Catholic ceremony marriage takes place as part of the Mass.

The couple will come to church to be united in marriage by the priest. He greets them before the whole congregation.

The priest then reads a *homily* (a moralising lecture) about marriage and what Christian marriage is.

He asks three set questions to the bride and groom to make sure they understand the responsibilities of marriage.



*Love and cherish
For richer
for poorer.*



The couple make their vows to each other.

The priest declares they have agreed to marry before God and accepts their decision. It is at this point he says: What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

The rings are blessed and exchanged.



The priest blesses the marriage.

The couple sign the marriage register. This is the civil bit of the ceremony.

Divorce and remarriage



relate
the relationship people

- ❑ **Divorce:** legal ending of a marriage. This can only take place after a year.
- ❑ **Remarriage:** when someone marries again whilst their former husband or wife is still alive.

Christian and Buddhist views on divorce and remarriage

Christian views	Buddhist views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some Christians believe the sanctity of the marriage vows means they must be kept no matter what. • The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament that is permanent, lifelong and cannot be dissolved by civil divorce. Catholics can separate but not remarry while their partner is still alive. • Other Christians believe that sometimes divorce is the lesser of two evils and should be allowed for compassionate reasons. • Protestant Churches (e.g. Methodists) accept civil divorce and allow remarriage in church under certain conditions. Divorced Anglicans can remarry in church with the bishop's permission. • These Christians think the Church should reflect God's forgiveness and allow couples a second chance for happiness. • Jesus taught that anyone who divorced and remarried was committing adultery (Mark 10:11–12). • But Matthew 5:32 says, 'If a man divorces his wife for any cause other than unchastity (unfaithfulness) he involves her in adultery'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Buddhism there is no teaching that states divorce or remarriage are wrong. • But societies where Buddhism is prevalent tend to disapprove of divorce, which is seen as a last resort. This means couples put more effort into mending their relationship when it goes wrong. • However, clinging to an attachment that produces suffering goes against the Buddha's teachings. • Most Buddhists would therefore consider divorce when it is not possible to reconcile the relationship, and it is the only way to reduce the couple's suffering. • Many Buddhists see remarriage as an opportunity to commit to a new, healthy relationship that increases people's happiness.

TIP
Note that Mark 10:11–12 suggests divorce is always wrong, but Matthew 5:32 suggests it is acceptable in cases of unfaithfulness.

Christian and Buddhist responses to couples having marriage problems

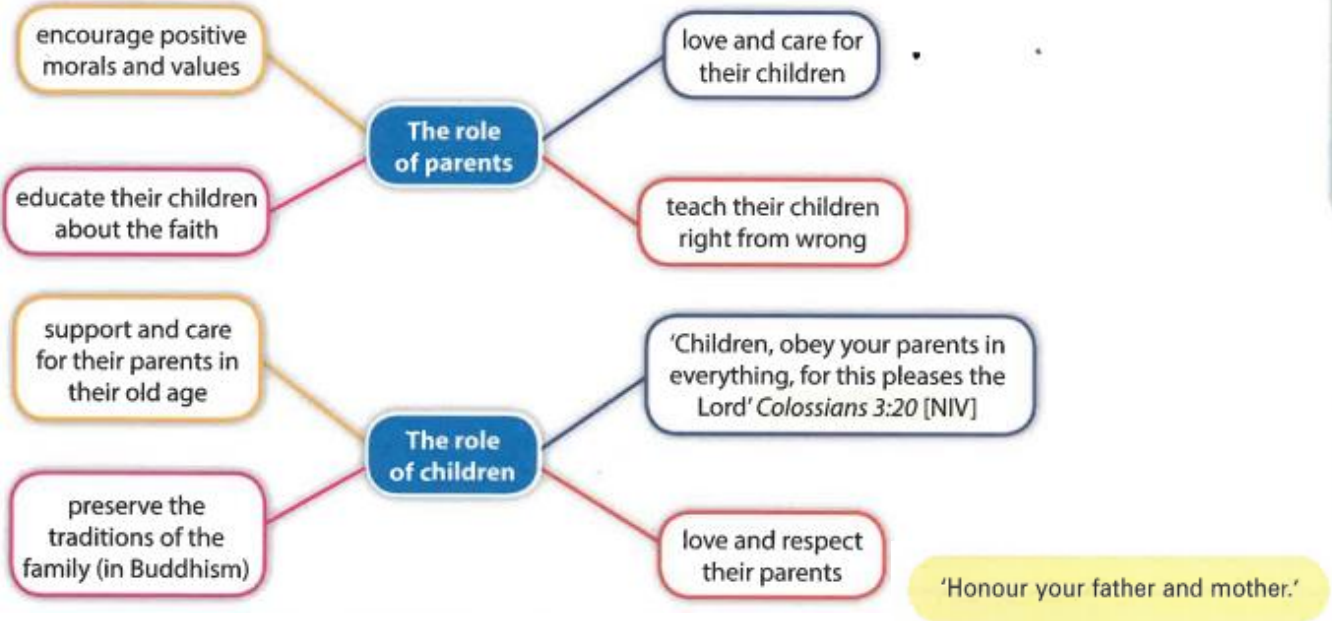
- ❑ Churches offer counselling, prayer and sacraments to support couples.
- ❑ They may refer couples to outside agencies such as **Relate** and **ACCORD**.
- ❑ Christians may be encouraged to bring forgiveness and reconciliation into their marriage.
- ❑ Buddhists may be encouraged to practice the five moral precepts more fully such as not causing harm and not practicing sexual misconduct.

ACCORD is Ireland's leading nationwide agency supporting marriage and relationships for over 50 years through its 55 Centres and 1,000+ personnel. Our aim is to help couples prepare for, achieve and sustain their marriage and family relationships, to offer ongoing relationship support and assist them in times of difficulty or crisis.



CATHOLIC MARRIAGE CARE SERVICE

Family



Procreation

- Mainly takes place within the family.
- There is more emphasis in Christianity (and especially Catholicism) on procreation as a purpose of the family.
- In Buddhism there are no religious pressures or expectations to have children.

Stability and the protection of children

- Families provide secure, stable environments for children to grow up in.
- Families offer mutual support and protection for their members.

“Children thrive, grow and develop within the love and safeguarding of a family. Within the family we care for the young, the old and those with caring needs.”
The Church of England website

The purpose of families

Educating children in a faith

- **Christian** parents are expected to be good role models and teach their children Christian values.
- They should teach children about the faith and nurture their spiritual lives, which they may do through daily prayer.
- Some parents send their children to faith schools or groups run by their church for religious education.
- Most **Buddhist** parents teach their children Buddhist beliefs and practices, and how to show devotion and respect towards the Buddha.
- They will teach their children good morals and values (such as the five moral precepts – see page 78).
- They will usually involve their children in religious ceremonies and gatherings.
- Some may send their children to monasteries to be educated.

Nuclear family

- A mother, father and children.
- The most common family type in the West.
- For Christians, it fulfils God's plan for a man and woman to be united together and increase in number (Genesis 1:28 and 2:24).

Extended family

- Includes grandparents and other relatives as well.
- In Biblical times, many people lived in extended families for extra support.
- Extended families are still common in Buddhist countries such as Thailand and Sri Lanka.

Families with same-sex parents

- When a homosexual couple raise children together.
- Some Christians disapprove of same-sex parents as they believe children should grow up with a male and female role model as parents.
- Other Christians, and most Buddhists, think it is more important for children to be in a secure and loving family regardless of the gender of their parents.

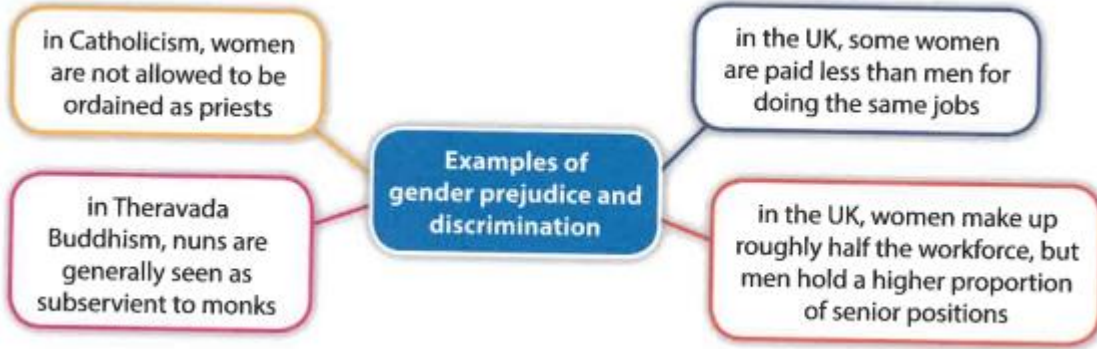
Polygamous families

- When a man has two wives.
- Illegal in the UK.
- For Christians, it goes against God's plan for marriage to be between one woman and one man, and can lead to sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 7:2).
- Not the favoured family model in Buddhism as it is considered likely to cause suffering to those involved.

- ❑ **Families:** people related by blood, marriage or adoption.
- ❑ **Nuclear family:** includes a mother, father and their children.
- ❑ **Extended family:** includes grandparents as well as other relatives.
- ❑ **Polygamous families:** this is when a man has two wives or more. This is illegal in the UK.

Gender equality

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)



Gender discrimination and prejudice

- ❑ The **Sex Discrimination Act 1975** made gender discrimination illegal in the UK, although it still happens today.
- ❑ Further steps towards equality and justice for gender occurred through the Equality Act 2010.
- ❑ The **Equality Act 2010** states: says it's **only unlawful discrimination if you're treated a certain way, because of certain reasons called 'protected characteristics'**. Sex is one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. A nightclub allows women in for free but you have to pay because you're a man.

- ❑ **Gender equality:** means men and woman should be given the same rights and opportunities as each other.
- ❑ **Gender prejudice:** holding biased opinions about people based on their gender.
- ❑ **Sexual stereotyping:** have a fixed idea or image of how men and women will behave.
- ❑ **Gender discrimination:** treating or acting against someone differently because of their gender.

In the UK	Christian views	Buddhist views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past, men had more power and rights than women. • Traditional roles involved men working to support the family, and women caring for the home and raising children. • Today, most people in the UK are against gender prejudice and discrimination, but it still occurs. • The roles of men and women have become more flexible, and childcare is often shared more equally between parents. • Who takes on what role in a family may be decided by financial considerations or the different skills of the parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians believe all people are created equal in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 [NIV]</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The command to love one's neighbour means discrimination is wrong. • Jesus treated women with respect and welcomed them as disciples. • Some traditional Christians think husbands should rule over their wives, based on a literal interpretation of Genesis 3:16. • Most Christians today see marriage as an equal partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the Buddha's time women were seen as inferior to men. • The Buddha ordained women as nuns, although was at first reluctant to do so. • The <i>Aparimitayur Sutra</i> suggests women must be reborn as men before they can achieve enlightenment. Some Buddhists still believe this today. • In contrast, the <i>Lotus Sutra</i> teaches that men and women are equal in their ability to attain enlightenment. • Many Buddhists today believe men and women should have equal status, and that gender discrimination expresses a lack of loving kindness. • E.g. the Triratna Buddhist Order has the same ordination process for men and women.

✝ Christianity

- Some of the earliest converts, and leaders of churches were women, for example Priscilla at Ephesus.
- There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)
- So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)

☸ Buddhism

- If a man denies the possibility of enlightenment of women, then his own enlightenment is impossible. (Lotus Sutra)
- There is no legal basis in Vinaya (monastic) law to deny a woman the right to full ordination.
- The practice of Buddhism is the same for men and women, showing no inequality of demands on either.

