

# Crime & Punishment: Exam Technique

Explain RC teaching with regard to the treatment of suspected or actual criminals.

## Introducing View

*According to Judeo-Christian/Christian teaching ...*

*In the Judeo-Christian/Christian perspective ...*

*A Judeo-Christian/Christian perspective suggests that ...*

*In the light of Judeo-Christian/Christian teaching ...*

*The gospels indicate that ...*

*Teaching in the Torah/Pentateuch indicates that ...*

*...*

## Relevant Scripture

*Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us ... So God created human beings, making them to be like himself ... (Gen 1)*

*You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But now I tell you: do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, let him slap your left cheek too ... (Matt 5:38-39)*

*You must love God with all your heart, your mind, your soul, your strength. And you must love your neighbour as yourself ... (cf. Mark 12:29)*

*And when you stand and pray, forgive anything you may have against anyone, so that your Father in heaven will forgive the wrongs you have done ... (Mark 11:25)*

*If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in one day, and each time he comes to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him' ... (Luke 17:3-4)*

## Link with issue

- Moral responsibility
- Equality before the law
- Presumption of innocence
- Willingness to forgive replaces spirit of bitterness
- Forgiveness ≠ 'letting off'
- Rule of law replaces vengeance
- Criminals are still persons who should not be 'written off' as failures

## Tips


### 1 Introduce points properly...


- Don't start with: 'It says in the Bible that ...'; try to be more specific.
- Adapt (don't just adopt) the introductions above.
- Don't overuse the introductions; you'll make your answer look clunky.

### 2 Stitch the introduction nicely to the body of the point...

- This is a **badly** stitched answer:
  - 'From a Gospel standpoint 'treat others as you would have them treat you' which means presumption of innocence.'
- This is **better**:
  - 'Applying the Golden Rule of the Gospels, Roman Catholics would argue that every person would want to have a fair chance under trial and so they should consider each defendant as innocent until proved guilty.'

 *introduction*

 *scripture*

 *issue*

### 3 Make sure that the scripture (or RC teaching) you use directly backs up the point you wish to make.

- In this case, it **doesn't**:
  - 'According to the Genesis Creation Accounts, God made humans in his image and so Catholics believe that forgiveness is not the same as letting a criminal off the hook.'
- This is **better**:
  - 'According to the Genesis Creation Accounts, God made humans in his image, and so every person should be treated equal before the law, as they are equal before God.'

### 4 Pay attention to the question – it's asking about Roman Catholic teaching about criminals, real or accused. It is not asking for your opinion about this issue.

Now try to formulate an answer to this question, using the tips as guidelines, not as hard and fast rules.