

# Relationships

## Key words

- Commitment - making and keeping a promise, being devoted towards someone or something
- Responsibility - duties you should carry out, something you do out of a sense of duty, or because you are expected to do it
- Conflict - breakdown of relationships, working against each other rather than together in unity
- Reconciliation - making up and starting together again

## Key Facts

### Sex before and outside marriage

#### Hindu:

- Hindus don't allow sex before marriage or adultery because sex is a gift from God which should be restricted to marriage. Kama (sensual pleasure) is one of the 4 aims of life but sex is for the householder stage of life which means being married.
- Adultery betrays the marriage promises and affects people's karma.
- Some Hindus think contraception could be against ahimsa (non-violence)

#### Christian:

- Most Christians believe that sex should only happen in marriage because the Bible teaches that fornication is wrong and many Christians believe that fornication is sex before marriage. They say sex is a gift from God and so is marriage. Also some church leaders say that sex before marriage is a sin.
- But some liberal Protestant Christians say as long as you are committed and intend to marry that sex before marriage is okay. The Bible doesn't specifically condemn sex before marriage, plus the Church has to come to terms with modern attitudes to cohabitation. Also Jesus taught that love is the most important thing.
- All Christians believe that adultery is wrong because it breaks the marriage vows and the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment.
- Catholic Christians say no to contraception because it's God's plan to have children in marriage. Protestant Christians accept contraception, as it prevents unwanted pregnancy/diseases. But they are not agreeing with casual sex and still say the best place for sex is marriage!

### Marriage

#### Hindu:

- All Hindus are expected to marry because it's one of the stages of life. Hindu marriage is intended as a partnership for life.
- The reasons for marriage are: to fulfil a Hindu's role as a householder; to have a happy sex life; to find love and companionship; to have the joy of children
- The main features of a Hindu wedding service are likely to be: the couple taking 7 steps round the sacred fire; offerings to the gods; prayers and hymns about the joys of marriage; promises by husband and wife.

#### Christian:

- Christians regard marriage as a gift from God, but they don't have to marry.
- Christian marriage is for life; as a vow (promise) in the marriage service says, *'to love and to cherish in sickness and in health till death parts us.'*
- The reasons (purpose) for Christian marriage are: to live together in love, to have committed sex, comfort and companionship, to have children and create a Christian family.
- The main features of a Christian wedding are: exchange of vows before God and witnesses; exchange of rings blessed by God; prayers, Bible readings on marriage, sermon or talk on the duties of marriage; sometimes they have holy communion (bread and wine) to unite the couple with Christ and each other.

### Divorce and remarriage:

#### Hindu:

- Divorce is allowed by Hinduism on grounds of cruelty or lack of children after 15 years of marriage because children are seen as important, marriage is an agreement not a sacrament (holy), Hindu teachings on ahimsa (non-violence) mean that cruelty should not be accepted.
- However, there aren't many divorces because marriages are often arranged and therefore there is family pressure to make them work. Hindus may re-marry after divorce.

#### Christian:

- Catholic Christians believe there can be no divorce because Jesus banned divorce, and when people marry they make a covenant with God which cannot be broken without God's consent. It can be decided that a marriage never existed (annulment) but Catholics who state divorce aren't allowed to remarry.
- Other Christians disapprove of divorce, but believe that God is always prepared to forgive and that in the book of Matthew in the Bible Jesus allows divorce for adultery.

## Key quotes

'You shall not commit adultery' Exodus

'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?' 1 Corinthians