

Questions of morality

Key terms	
Word/phrase	Meaning
Absolute morality	The view that what is good/bad or right/wrong does not change. It is the same for everyone all the time
Christian Aid	A charity that puts Christian moral teachings into action
Consequentialist	Deciding what is right/wrong or good/bad depending on the outcome or consequences of an action rather than by following rules
Equality	The view that different people should be treated the same
Ethics	The study of ideas about what is good/bad or right/wrong
Hedonic Calculus	The method used by Utilitarians to work out whether their actions will increase happiness or suffering
Humanist	Someone who does not believe in God and decides what is right and wrong based on what is best for humans
Morals	Your sense of what is good/bad or right/wrong
Parable	A story with an important message or meaning. Jesus used parables to teach his followers
Peter Singer	A Utilitarian philosopher who runs a website which helps people choose the most effective way to give to charity
Pluralism	Respecting all religions
Relative morality	The view that what is good/bad or right/wrong can change depending on the circumstances
Situation Ethics	A Christian way of deciding what is the right thing to do based on what is the most loving thing to do in the situation
Ten Commandments	A set of Christian absolute moral rules, given to Moses by God
Utilitarianism	A non-religious way of deciding what is good/bad or right/wrong depending on whether the consequences will increase happiness or suffering

Absolute and relative morality

Is it always right to tell the truth? Is it always wrong to steal?



If you think morality is *absolute*, then the answer is yes! The same rules apply in all situations and everyone should follow them.

If you think morality is *relative*, then the answer is no. Depending on the situation, it could be right to tell a lie, or OK to steal.

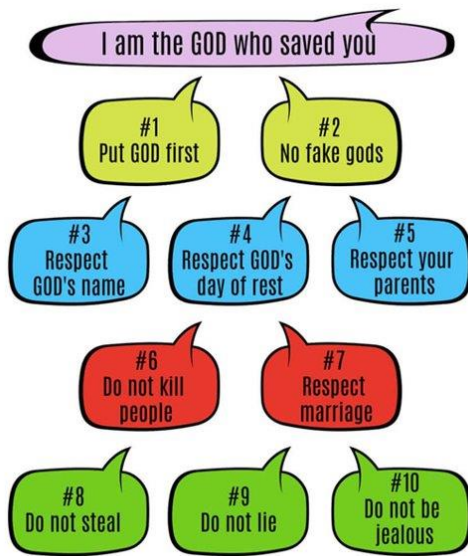


Sikh moral values

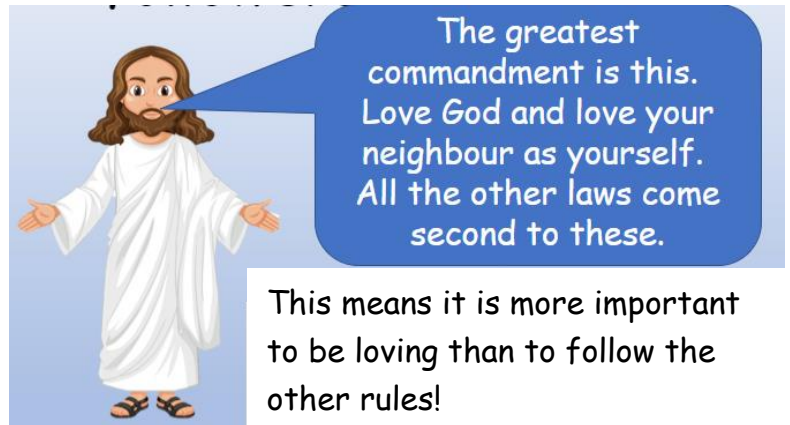
Guru Nanak taught Sikhs about four important moral values that they should live up to. They are: Working hard, giving to others, pluralism (respecting all religions) and equality (treating everyone the same, as we are all valuable)

Christian moral teachings

The Ten Commandments



The Greatest commandment according to Jesus



Situation Ethics

This is a Christian way of deciding what is right and wrong depending on what the most loving thing to do is. It is right to break a rule if it means you are doing the most loving thing for someone. So something can be right in one situation and wrong in another.



The Parable of the Sheep and Goats

Jesus said God will separate people like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will judge people according to whether or not they have helped those in need, for example by feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, sheltering the homeless and caring for those who are sick or in prison.

Christian Aid

This is a charity that tries to put Christian teachings into action by helping those in need. They are following Jesus' teaching to 'love your neighbour as yourselves' and to help those in need as he taught them in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats. They do this by providing food, clean water, shelter and medical help to those in need all over the world.



Utilitarianism

This is a non-religious way of deciding what is right and wrong. Utilitarians think that actions which produce more happiness and less suffering are the right things to do. So something can be right in one situation and wrong in another.

They use a method called the **Hedonic Calculus** to help them decide, based on things like how many people will be made happy or suffer, how long the effects will last, how strong the feelings will be and how sure they are of the outcome.

Peter Singer is a Utilitarian who has set up a website called 'The life you can save' which helps people to decide the most effective way to give to charity. He focuses on charities which help to increase happiness and reduce suffering for the most people.