

# Year 9 Unit 2: Marriage and the Family

## KEY TERMS

**Marriage:** a legal union between two people

**Commitment:** a promise to be faithful

**Vows:** promises made by the couple to be faithful to each other

**Contract:** a formal agreement or legal bond

**Marriage contract:** a contract between a bride and groom

**Covenant:** an agreement

**Responsibility:** the legal or moral duty which a person has.

**Nuclear family** - parents and children living in same home;

**Same Sex family** - Also an example of a nuclear family

**One-Parent (Single) family** - one parent raising the children due to death/divorce/separation from partner;

**Extended family** - 3 or more generations living in the same home or living on the same street or within a few streets

**Reconstituted (Step) family** - step families, combining children of both partners who may live permanently or temporary with their respective parent, as well as siblings from the new relationship;

**Adopted family** - Also an example of a nuclear family

**Communal family** - children are raised together and not necessarily by their parents but by other adults in the commune, e.g. kibbutz, new age travellers etc.

**Divorce** - Divorce, also known as dissolution of marriage, is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union

## Relationships

Relationships connect us to other people. Any person could be one of the following to someone else: a mum or dad, a son or daughter, a sister or brother, a neighbour or friend, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a teacher or student, a doctor or social worker, an employer or workmate.



**family** – a group of people connected by marriage or blood relationships or adoption where the adults take responsibility for the children.

## The Changing Nature of Family Life

In the 1960s family life for the vast majority of people involved a nuclear family; that it is a mother and father married to each other with their children. However this has changed and there are now more reconstituted families, cohabiting families and re-constituted families among others.

- The nuclear family is perhaps still the most popular, just!
- The extended family is becoming more popular as more mothers are in paid employment and use retired grandparents to look after their children.

Why else do you think extended families are more prominent today?

- Single parent families where children are brought up a sole parent have grown massively. These have increased due to higher divorce rates and also more children born out of wedlock.
- The number of families where children are brought up by cohabiting parents has increased to 11% (2008)
- Reconstituted families where a marriage breaks up and divorced partners remarry to set up a new family has dramatically increased. Indeed, 20% of thirty something men are now stepfathers and continues to increase.

## Families in other cultures

**Kibbutz** - A shared or 'collective community in Israel, set up over 100 years ago as shared farms. The idea is that the property and work is shared. Men and women are seen as equal. Between 1,000 and 24, 000 people live in each kibbutz. Until the 1970s children were separated from their parents. They were raised in special units by trained nurses and teachers. It was thought that this was better than being raised by busy working parents. Parents would get to see their children for a few hours in the evening. Today there are 266 kibbutzim in Israel and family life has changed over the last 30 years. Children still spend most of the day at school or in childcare, but now they live with their parents as a nuclear family in small bungalows or flats. Women are more involved in their children's activities. Working women are given an extra hour off to do housework.



## Families in other cultures

**Zulu** - Three million Zulus live in the countryside in South Africa. Each village contains an extended family with a chief as a leader. There are clear gender roles for the children in the village. The young boys help with looking after the cattle. The girls help their mothers with the cooking and looking after younger siblings, carrying wood and fetching water.

At the age of 14 girls can be married. A wedding must take place when the moon is bright to bring good luck. Offerings are also made to the spirits of ancestors for protection, health and happiness. No marriage is permanent until a child is born. In traditional Zulu culture a man can have several wives as long as he can afford to pay for them. This is called polygamy. The wives live in separate huts in order of importance.

Today nearly half of all Zulus have moved to live in cities but polygamy continues. Jacob Zuma, currently President of South Africa, has married six times and has twenty-one children. One of his wives has died and one divorced him, so currently has four wives.



## Role and Importance of family

- Procreation – the family should be for the purpose of having and bringing up children
- Stability – the family should be for providing a secure, stable environment for children
- Faith – the family should be a way of bringing children up as good Christians



What roles do family members have? Who does the housework who has a job? What is the role of children?

## Why do people get married?

People get married to share their lives with the person they love. Marriage brings security because it is a serious, lifelong and public commitment. It is a legal contract that protects the rights of each partner and makes children born within a marriage 'legitimate'. Marriage is also has some financial advantages.

Religions consider the desire for sexual intimacy and children natural. Therefore, they believe that marriage is the proper place to express sexuality, develop companionship and provide a secure environment to bring up children in a religious faith.

## Divorce

You can get a divorce if you have been married at least a year and your relationship has permanently broken down. You must have a marriage that is legally recognised in the UK, and have a permanent home in England or Wales. There are 3 main steps to getting divorced: 1 - File a divorce petition , 2 - Apply for a decree nisi , and 3 - Apply for a decree absolute.

## Arranged and forced Marriage

**Arranged Marriage** - a marriage which family members or guardians may help 'arrange' by finding suitable partners and matching them together. This is consented to by the couple, although sometimes coercion or persuasion methods are used.

**forced Marriage** – a marriage which family members or guardians enforce by making the couple feel as though they have no alternative or by actively threatening them.

**family honour** – the idea a family must maintain a particular standing in a community.

**Domestic servitude** – a form of modern slavery, associated with some forced marriages.

**Hindu Marriage** - Traditionally Hindu marriages were arranged by the families of the couple; some marriages are still arranged in this way. However where Hindus live in countries where it is more usual for people to find their own marriage partner they are adopting or adapting some of the customs of the society in which they live. However a marriage is arranged, the couple usually feel it is very important to have the blessing of their families.

**Muslims Marriage** - Marriages in Islam are often arranged (by the two families of the bride and groom) but these can only take place with the consent of both parties. If someone was forced to marry then the marriage would be invalid. Courting or 'going out together' is not permitted and the couple who may be married are only allowed to meet each other when members of their families are present. Muslim men may have up to four wives but each wife must be treated equally and his other wives must agree before a Muslim may take another wife. A Muslim man may marry a Jew or a Christian but a Muslim woman may only marry a Muslim man.