

Sanctity of Life

Sanctity of Life: The belief that all life is precious or sacred. Some people believe that only human life holds this special status

Most people, regardless of faith, believe that human life is special and worthy of being preserved. The belief in the sanctity of life has a large impact on medical ethics (the process of deciding what is right and wrong in medicine), especially those which relate to creating or life-ending procedures.



Christianity

- Life comes from God. It is a gift, unique and priceless.
- God is interested and involved in each human's life
- God created each person unique and 'in his image', just as he created Adam and Eve
- Only God can give and take life
- Quaker Christians oppose the death penalty because each person contains a reflection of the image of God, which makes every human soul sacred



Christianity

- "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16)
 - Catholic Christians disagree with artificial methods of contraception and IVF (creating a baby in a laboratory outside of the act of sex)
 - Jesus showed that all life should be valued. He tended to the leper and visited the sick to show that all lives are worthy of respect and compassion.
 - "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart." (Jeremiah 1:5)



Sanctity of Life & Quality of Life

Humanists

- Life is precious because it is the life we have (we do not get another life)
- The value of life does not come from God. Our lives have value because we only have one life. There is no soul or afterlife to live on at death
- A central purpose of life is to make ourselves and others around us as happy as possible; we can benefit others through compassion and kindness
- Life is not 'scared' but is worthy of the highest respect



Quality of Life



Quality of Life: The extent to which life is pleasurable or meaningful

Most believe that the quality of our lives is more important than whether it is special or sacred. If our life is free from pain and anxiety and if we live with freedom and dignity, then we have a good quality of life.

How do we measure quality of life?

Indicators to measure quality of life include living conditions, health, education, leisure and social interactions, disability, levels of pain and whether human rights are granted. If a person's life has insufficient quality, some would argue that they should have the right to die.

In medical ethics, treating an illness should be weighed against the extent to which they are going to live a life free from pain and suffering afterwards. **Is the treatment cost-worthy?**

Factors Controlling Quality of Life

- Experience of life
- Living Conditions
- Usefulness or employment
- Education
- Health
- Leisure and social interactions
- Economic and physical safety
- Governance and basic human rights
- Natural living environment

