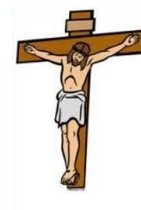
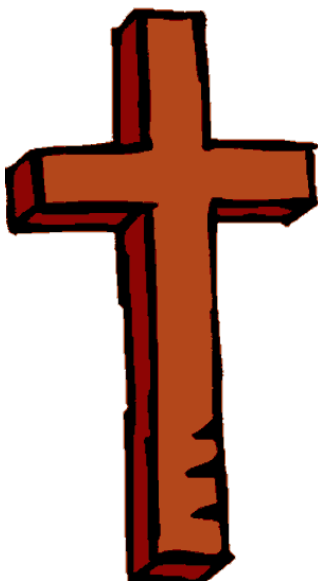


RS Revision Pack: AQA

Religious Studies A: Christianity

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062>

Paper	Content	Weighting	Time
Component 1: The study of religions. Beliefs, Teachings and Practices.	Christianity: Beliefs and Teachings Christianity: Practices Sikhism: Beliefs and Teachings Sikhism: Practices	Christianity: 25% Sikhism: 25%	1 hour 45
Component 2: Thematic Studies	Theme A: Relationships and Families Theme B: Religion and life. Theme C: Existence of God and Revelation Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment.	50%	1 hour 45



Christianity: Beliefs and Teachings

Key Knowledge:

- The main religious tradition in Great Britain is Christianity.
- There are many **denominations** within Christianity (e.g. Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) and you should be aware that different Christians may differ in their beliefs over certain issues.
- Christianity is a monotheistic religion, meaning they believe in only **one God**. Despite the differences between denominations, all Christians share this key belief.



Key beliefs:

The nature of God:

- God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering
- the oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1–3 and Genesis 1:1–3).
- Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.

God as omnipotent, loving and just, and the problem of evil and suffering

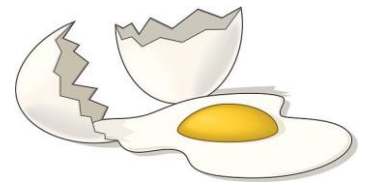
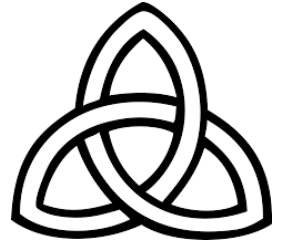
- Christians believe God is **OMNIPOTENT**. This means he is **all-powerful**, and that nothing is impossible.
- Luke 1 v 37: 'Nothing is impossible with God'.
- Christians also believe God is **BENEVOLENT**, meaning he is **all-loving**, and wants the best for all of his creations. As they believe God is all-loving, they also believe they should show love to others in their daily lives.
- 1 John 4 v 8: 'Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love'.
- Christians also believe God is **JUST**, meaning he is **fair**, and will **bring about what is right**. As the ultimate source of justice, Christians believe God would never support injustice, ill-treatment, prejudice or oppression.
- Isaiah 30 v 18: 'For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him'.
- However, despite the Christian belief that God is all powerful, all loving and just, there is still **evil and suffering** in the world. For example, humans commit terrible acts towards other humans, and there are natural disasters such as hurricanes which devastate the lives of thousands of people. This raises the question of how and **why God would allow these things to happen** if he was so powerful, loving and fair.
- Christians believe that there must be a reason behind this suffering, and would still trust God. It might not be easy to understand, but they would think that **God is still in control of what is going on, and that God does not make mistakes**.



- Isaiah 41 v 10: 'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God'.

The oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Christians are **monotheists**, meaning they believe there is only **one God**.
- However, this God is understood as a concept called the **TRINITY**: the belief that this one God has three persons: **God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit**. These three persons are all separate, but are also part of one being.
- The concept of the Trinity, that God is one but also in 3 parts, can be difficult to understand. It might be easier to compare it to something such as an egg. An egg is one thing, but it has a shell, a yolk and a white. These three parts are all separate and serve different functions, but they are all part of one egg.



God the Father

- The first person of the Trinity
- **Creator** of the earth
- Believed to be **all powerful, all loving, all knowing and present everywhere**



God the Son

- The second person of the Trinity
- God represented in **human form** on earth: **Jesus Christ**
- Known as the **incarnation**, meaning 'in flesh': God in human form
- Jesus was fully human, but also fully God.



God the Holy Spirit

- The third person of the Trinity
- Christians believe that once Jesus had left the earth, **God sent the Holy Spirit to influence, guide and sustain the earth** and all life on it. The Holy Spirit is believed to be the unseen power of God at work in the world in the past, present and future.
- Sometimes represented as a **dove**, because it says in the Bible that when Jesus was baptised, the Holy Spirit appeared like a dove.



Different Christian beliefs about creation including the role of Word and Spirit (John 1:1–3 and Genesis 1:1–3).

Genesis Creation Story

- Christians believe that God created the earth and all living things on the earth. One story about the **creation** of the world is found in **Genesis chapter 1** (Genesis is the first book in the Bible).
- **Genesis 1 v 1-3: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.** And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light'.
- The creation story then goes on to say that **God made the world in six days** (creating things such as the sky, the sun, moon and stars, sea creatures and birds, land animals, and finally humans: Adam and Eve) **and rested on the seventh day.**
- SOME Christians believe that the creation story is literally true, and happened exactly as it said in the Bible. These Christians are called **FUNDAMENTALISTS.**
- MANY Christians believe that the creation story is not literally or scientifically accurate, and is more of a story just to symbolise the idea that God ultimately made the world. One example of a denomination that believes this would be **LIBERALS.**



The role of the Spirit

- The Spirit is mentioned in the Genesis creation story: '**The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters**'. Some Christians interpret this to mean that the **Holy Spirit was present at creation** and already active in the world, even though the Holy Spirit is generally understood to have been left on earth by God after Jesus went to heaven.



John 1 v 1-3: 'The Word'

- No one knows exactly when the story in Genesis 1 was first written, but experts believe it to be around 500BC. Around 600 years later, in the New Testament of the Bible, John opened his gospel with the following passage:
- '**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made'. John 1 v 1-3.
- Experts have discussed the idea of 'the Word' for years and mostly agree that **the Word refers to the son of God: Jesus.**



- This shows that not only was the Spirit present at creation, but Jesus was as well. This means that **all 3 parts of the Trinity were present at creation**, and have existed since the beginning.



Different Christian beliefs about the afterlife and their importance, including: resurrection and life after death; judgement, heaven and hell.

- For thousands of years, people have believed that death is not the end and that there is a new life after death. Christians also believe that there is life after death, and this would influence the way they live their life on earth.

Resurrection

- Resurrection means **rising from the dead**.
- Different Christians believe different things about what will happen when we die, and how resurrection will take place.
- **Some believe a person's soul is resurrected very soon after they have died.**
- **Others believe it will happen in the future**, when they think **Jesus will come back to judge everyone**. At this point the dead will be raised again.
- The **Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church** believe that resurrection will be **physical** - at the end of the world we know now, we will be given our old bodies, but they will be transformed into a glorified state, in which suffering will not exist.
- "So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. **The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable**. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown in a natural body, it is raised in a spiritual body". 1 Corinthians 15 v 42-44.
- 'Perishable' means that it will decay. When this passage says 'it is sown', it is referring to the physical bodies we have now.



The afterlife

- Christians generally believe that **human beings receive eternal (everlasting) life** as a gift from God.
- The afterlife begins either when someone dies, or on **Judgement Day** (the day when Christians believe Jesus will come back and judge the living and the dead).
- The Apostle's Creed, a statement of Christian belief, says '**I believe in... The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting**'.
-



Judgement

- Christians believe **God will decide the fate of those who die**.
- God will take into account the life of the person, and how much they have tried to follow God and the teachings of Jesus.
- Beliefs about judgement can be seen through the **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**:

Matthew 25: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will **separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats**. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.**'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'



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The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Then he will say to those on his left, '**Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I**

needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

- This parable describes how the 'sheep' were told that anytime they had helped someone in need, they had done this for God. When the 'goats' had ignored people who were in need, it was as though they had ignored God.
- This shows that Christians believe the way we behave and treat others will have some influence over how we are judged, and whether we go to heaven or hell.

Belief in Jesus

- However, this is not enough to guarantee a good afterlife. We cannot just be 'good people' and go to heaven.
- In John 14 v 6 Jesus said: **'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'.**
- This shows that Christians believe following Jesus is essential if they are to get to heaven.



Heaven and Hell

- Depending on how they are judged, Christians believe people will either go to **heaven or hell**.
- **Catholics** believe in a place called **purgatory**, which is an intermediate state that the souls of some Christians wait to receive their place in heaven.
- No one can know for sure what heaven and hell are like as no one has been and come back to tell us! However, traditional understandings of heaven and hell are as follows:
- Heaven is thought to be a place of peace, free from pain and suffering.
- It is not clear whether this is a physical place or a spiritual place.



- It is thought to be a place where people are rewarded for the good lives they have led, and are possibly reunited with friends and family members who have passed away before.
- Christians believe that God will forgive people's sins so everyone could potentially go to heaven if they asked God for forgiveness.
- Hell is often seen as the opposite of heaven; a state of existence without God.
- It is often thought to be a place of suffering, terror, fire and torture, ruled by the devil.
- Some people question why a loving God would allow hell to exist, and prefer to describe hell as a separation from God, rather than a state of torture.



Key Beliefs: Jesus Christ and salvation

Beliefs and teachings about:

- the incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God
- the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension
- sin, including original sin
- the means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit
- the role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement.

The Incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God

The Incarnation

- The story of Jesus' birth is often retold at Christmas, and although not all of the details we hear may be historically accurate, it does contain some important Christian truths.
- Christians believe that Mary did not conceive Jesus sexually - Joseph (who Mary was engaged to), raised Jesus as his own, but he was not his natural father.
- Christians believe that **God was Jesus' father**, and the idea that Mary became pregnant, even though she was a virgin, is seen as a miracle.
- This idea shows Christians that Jesus was God **incarnate** - God in human form.
- It is a fundamental Christian belief that through the **incarnation**, God showed himself as a **human being** for around 30 years (through Jesus).



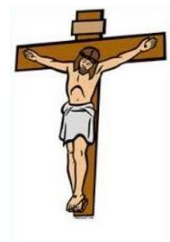
The Son of God

- There are a number of stories and quotes which show Jesus was thought of as the son of God:
- "When Jesus was baptised, a voice from heaven said, 'You are my son'." Mark 1 v 11
- "Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the son of the blessed one?' 'I am', said Jesus". Mark 14 v 6

Jesus' Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension

Crucifixion

- Jesus was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, and his death was by crucifixion
- This was the form of execution favoured by the Romans, where the victim was nailed to a cross
- This would have been excruciatingly painful, and, because Jesus was thought to be fully human as well as fully God, Christians believe he would have experienced this pain just like anyone else.
- On the cross, Jesus is thought to have said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".
- Jesus' crucifixion **impacts** on Christians today. It shows them:
 - Jesus has **died for their sins**, so if they ask for **forgiveness**, they will still be able to go to heaven.
 - Suffering is a normal part of life; their role model suffered, so **they can endure suffering** as well, and **God understands their suffering**.



Resurrection

- Jesus' body had been placed in a tomb-like cave and a stone had been rolled in front of it. This was because they couldn't bury him until after the Sabbath day.
- Christians believe that some of Jesus' female followers went to the cave to prepare Jesus' body for burial but when they got there, the stone was rolled away and **Jesus' body was not there**.
- An angel appeared to the women and told the women that **Jesus had risen from the dead (resurrected)**, and that they should go to tell all of his followers.
- For the next few days or weeks, **Jesus appeared to several people**, including the disciples, telling them that he had risen from the dead.
- In one account, Thomas, one of his disciples, doubted he had resurrected. Jesus told him to **touch his palms** as proof that he was really there.
- For Christians, Jesus' resurrection shows them that:
 - Death is not the end
 - Good can overcome evil
 - There is always hope, even in difficult times.



Ascension

- The ascension refers to when Jesus left the earth and 'ascended' (rose) up to heaven.
- "While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven". Luke 24 v 50.
- The ascension shows Christians that **Jesus is now with God** in heaven.
- It **paves the way for the Holy Spirit**, who would then be given by God to give guidance
- It shows **Jesus' power**, because he was able to ascend to heaven, a seemingly impossible act.



Sin, including Original Sin

- Sin is any thought or action that **separates humans from God** - it is an action thought to be **against God's laws** or wishes.
- Sinful actions may be illegal, e.g. assault or murder. Others may not be illegal, such as committing adultery, but Christians would still believe they are wrong.
- Christians believe that **all people commit sins**; nobody is perfect.

Original Sin

- Original Sin means that all humans are born with the in-built tendency to do wrong i.e. **we are all born sinners!**
- This idea comes from the story of **Adam and Eve**, who sinned against God by eating an apple from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God had said not to eat from this tree, but they were tempted by a serpent (thought to represent the devil) and **ate the fruit** anyway; the first sin!
- This resulted in a **separation from God** which was then



passed on through the generations.

- The story shows that, although God gave humans free will, he still expects us to act in a certain way and avoiding committing sins.

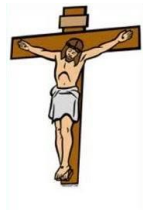
The means of salvation, including law, grace and Spirit

- **Salvation mean to be saved from sin.**
- Because of sin, Christians believe there is a separation from God and humans. **The only way this separation can be bridged is through salvation**, and this means that God will save people from their sins, meaning they will be able to go to heaven.
- Salvation could happen:
 - Through **good works** (by having faith in God and obeying God's law)
 - Through **grace** (by accepting that Jesus died for people's sins, and asking for God's grace and forgiveness)



The role of Christ in salvation including the idea of atonement

- Christians believe that **when Jesus died, he took the punishment for the sins** of all of humankind, and made up for the sins of Adam and Eve.
- When Jesus was crucified, some people shouted at him saying that if he was really the son of God, he would be able to get himself down from the cross. Christians believe that **Jesus knew he had to die in order to take the punishment for everyone's sins - he was a human sacrifice.**
- Jesus' resurrection then showed that **death had been defeated, and that good had overcome evil.** Christians believe they can now ask for forgiveness and go to heaven when they die.



Atonement

- Atonement means that **Jesus' death and resurrection restored (made better) the relationship between God and humans.**
- Humans could be **'at one'** with God again (which is where the word 'atone' comes from).



Christianity: Practices



Worship and festivals

- Different forms of worship and their significance:
 - liturgical, non-liturgical and informal, including the use of the Bible
 - private worship.
- Prayer and its significance, including the Lord's Prayer, set prayers and informal prayer.
- The role and meaning of the sacraments:
 - the meaning of sacrament
 - the sacrament of baptism and its significance for Christians; infant and believers' baptism; different beliefs about infant baptism
 - the sacrament of Holy Communion/Eucharist and its significance for Christians, including different ways in which it is celebrated and different interpretations of its meaning.
- The role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations including:
 - two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage: Lourdes and Iona
 - the celebrations of Christmas and Easter, including their importance for Christians in Great Britain today.

Different forms of worship and their significance

- Worship is the way that Christians **show their love and respect to God**. It is connected with the word 'worth', so Christians think God is worthy of being worshipped.
- Christians might worship alone, with others, in a church etc. It might involve **singing hymns, prayer, Bible readings, meditation** etc.
- Worship allows Christians to **praise and thank God**, to ask for **forgiveness** or to **seek help** for people who are suffering. It would **strengthen a Christian's relationship with God** and give them comfort and strength.



	Liturgical Worship	Non-liturgical Worship
Definition	A church service that follows a set pattern, structure or ritual	A service that does not follow a set pattern, structure, text or ritual
Characteristics	-A priest leads the congregation in formal prayers that have set responses. -Bible passages are read out and there may be a sermon (a religious talk) based on this. -The priest may perform symbolic actions which have a specific meaning.	-The people planning the service may choose an order to suit a theme -The service is focused on Bible readings and a sermon would be given based on this -The order, hymns, prayers etc may change from week to week. -They might take Holy Communion but this might be once or twice a month rather than every week. -One form of non-liturgical worship is informal worship - see below.
Denominations	Catholics, Orthodox and	Methodist or Baptist churches.

	Anglican churches will have a Eucharist service that follows a set pattern	
Why do it?	-There is a worldwide set order of service that is familiar to all, even visitors -The ritual has been passed down through generations, giving a sense of tradition	-The style of worship follows that of the early Christians just after Jesus died, who did not follow a set pattern when they worshipped. -It allows people to worship God in a more individualised way.

Other forms of worship:

INFORMAL WORSHIP: A form of non-liturgical worship. It is more **spontaneous**, and people will **freely share thoughts or prayers**.

Pentecostal churches might have informal worship where it is 'charismatic', meaning 'led by the Holy Spirit'. This might involve people **dancing, clapping, calling out and speaking in tongues** (speaking in an unknown language, believed to be led by the Holy Spirit).



PRIVATE WORSHIP: Individuals spend time with God **on their own** (or perhaps with a small group of close friends or family). It may involve **prayer, meditation, reading the Bible** etc.



Prayer and its significance

- Prayer is communicating with God in silence or aloud, with others or alone.
- People may pray in a humble position such as kneeling down, or with their hands together.
- Christians believe God will answer their prayers, however it might not always be in the way they want; ultimately God's will is the most important.
- Prayer allows Christians to find peace, to build their relationship with God, to find ways to cope in times of trouble etc.



Informal Prayers: A prayer that is made up by an individual using his or her own words

Set Prayers: Prayers that have been written down and said more than once by more than one person, for example the Lord's Prayer.



The Lord's Prayer:

- When Jesus was asked to teach his disciples how to pray, he answered with the Lord's Prayer:

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen'.

- This gives Christians a pattern of how to pray - it combines giving praise to God and asking for one's needs.
- The Lord's Prayer is often used in Christian worship and is said aloud by the whole congregation. It is often said at weddings, baptisms, Holy Communion services and funerals.

The role and meaning of the sacraments: Baptism and the Eucharist

Sacrament: 'An outward sign of inward grace'. In other words, it's a ritual which symbolises an important belief or decision.

- The Catholic and Orthodox church accept 7 sacraments which include baptism, Holy Communion (Eucharist) and marriage.
- Sacraments are thought to help to strengthen their relationship with God and bring Christians together as part of the wider Christian community.

Baptism

- The initiation rite by which people become members of the Christian church.
- The person's sins are forgiven and they start a 'new life' with Jesus.
- Baptism uses water to symbolise the washing away of people's sins.

	Infant Baptism	Adult/ Believer's Baptism
Definition	Babies and young children become members of the church	People old enough to understand the responsibility of being a Christian are welcomed into the church
Key Features	- Parents, godparents and other adults make promises on behalf of the infant. They promise to bring the child up in the Christian faith - Water is lightly poured or sprinkled on the head of the baby - The infant would wear white to symbolise purity - The sign of the cross might be made on the infant's forehead with water or oil - They are baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit	- The adult is fully immersed into water for a second or two - As they come up from under the water, it symbolises the person starting their 'new life' as a Christian - They would often wear white to symbolise purity - The adult may give a testimony which is the story of their faith and why they want to commit to Christianity. - They are baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Denominations	Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist	Baptists, Pentecostals
Why do it?	- Even babies are born with	- A baby is too young to understand

'Original Sin' because we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, who committed the first sin. Catholics and Orthodox Christians believe infant baptism removes this original sin.
- The child is welcomed into the church as soon as possible, giving them a good opportunity to live a Christian life



the importance of baptism, so some churches wait until the person can understand.
- Baptism itself does not save a person; they need to live a committed Christian life, so someone needs to have made a clear decision about this.



Eucharist

- Also known as Holy Communion
- It is the taking of the bread and the wine, to symbolise Jesus' body and blood.
- During the Last Supper (Jesus' final meal with his disciples, on the Thursday before he died), Jesus told his disciples to eat bread and drink wine to remember him.
- Christian churches go on to celebrate this today, as a reminder of the sacrifice Jesus made for them by dying on the cross for their sins.

Contrasting ways that it is celebrated:

Catholic Church (Known as Catholic Mass)	Orthodox Church (Known as the Divine Liturgy)
• Begins with a greeting from the priest and prayers of penance (trying to make up for sins) and praise. • On Sundays there are 3 readings from the Bible, a psalm (poem/song from the Bible) and a homily (a religious talk). • People say prayers for the church, the world, the local community, the sick and the dead • During the Eucharist service, bread and wine are brought to the altar 	• It aims to recreate heaven on earth • Much of the service takes place on the altar in the sanctuary behind a screen which represents the divide between heaven and earth • The priest passes through the screen using the Royal Doors. • The church is filled with candles and incense that help people to feel God's presence. • There are hymns, prayers and a reading from the Bible. • The priest will say the words of Jesus at the Last Supper behind the closed doors 

- The priest says the **Eucharistic Prayer** using the words of Jesus at the Last Supper
- The congregation say the **Lord's Prayer**
- The priest and the congregation give a sign of peace to each other
- Members of the congregation **come forward** to receive the communion
- The **priest blesses the people and tells them to go in peace.**

The
LORD'S
Prayer



- **Bread may be baked by members of the congregation, and the priest will select one loaf to be consecrated (declared to be sacred).**
- **The bread is divided into 4: 3 parts are consecrated and the 4th part is broken up into small pieces.**
- The priest comes through the Royal Doors and hands out the consecrated bread and wine together on a **spoon** to the people who come forward
- As people leave, the **priest gives them pieces of the unconsecrated bread** as a sign of being part of the Christian community.



The role and importance of pilgrimage and celebrations

Pilgrimage: A religious journey to a holy place. Going on pilgrimage is an act of worship and shows devotion to God.

Why go on pilgrimage?

Christians may go on pilgrimage to:

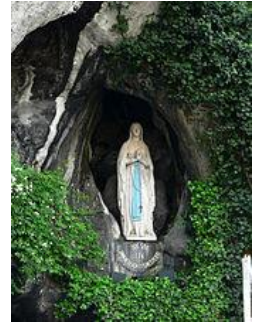
- Become closer to God and strengthen their faith
- Show that they are sorry for any sins committed and are asking for forgiveness
- Reflect on their lives, especially at times of big decisions
- Pray for something special
- Seek cure for an illness
- Experience a holy place
- Meet others who share their faith.

It is not essential that Christians go on pilgrimage but they may choose to, as it can play an important part in their spiritual lives. Often they come back feeling more committed to God and their faith.

Lourdes

- In south-west France
- It is dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus

- In 1858 a young girl named Bernadette had visions of Mary in a cave near the river. Mary told Bernadette to dig for a spring of water which had healing properties.
- Now, thousands of people visit Lourdes each year to pray at the cave (grotto) where Mary was seen.
- They may bathe in the water, where it is claimed that 67 miracles and over 6000 other cures have taken place.



Iona

- It is an island off the west coast of Scotland
- In the 6th century AD, an Irish saint established a small community on the island
- It is now the home of the Iona Community and it is a place of Christian pilgrimage dedicated to the Virgin Mary (mother of Jesus)
- Daily services are held there and the members of the community lead a 7 mile hike to the island's holy and historic spots, and conduct workshops on Christian themes.
- It is a tough physical journey to get to Iona as well as a spiritual journey.
- Visitors also help out with daily chores and meals while they're staying there.



Celebrations: Christmas

- Christmas remembers the INCARNATION: the belief that Jesus was born and was God in human form
- In Great Britain, Christmas is celebrated on 25th December
- Trees and homes are decorated with lights and nativity scenes. Schools and churches may put on nativity plays to retell the story of Jesus' birth, including Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem on a donkey, and Jesus being born in a manger as there was no room at the inn.
- Christians may send Christmas cards, go to church services, attend midnight mass on Christmas Eve and exchange gifts as a reminder of the gifts that the wise men gave to Jesus.



Celebrations: Easter

- Easter is often seen as the most important Christian festival as it remembers Jesus death and resurrection.
- During Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter), Christians remember the events leading up to Jesus' death on the cross.
- Jesus was crucified on 'Good Friday'. Special services are held and processions are sometimes held in the streets where a person leads by carrying a wooden cross.



- Easter Sunday is then a celebration of the day when Jesus was resurrected. Easter eggs are given today as a symbol of new life, representing the idea that Jesus rose from the dead.

The role of the church in the local and worldwide community

- The role of the Church in the local community, including food banks and street pastors.
- The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth.
- The importance of the worldwide Church including:
 - working for reconciliation
 - how Christian churches respond to persecution
 - the work of one of the following: Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD), **Christian Aid**, Tearfund.

The role of the church in the local community

'The church' may refer to the building in which Christians worship. However, 'the church' can also refer to the Christian community. So the church is really about the people rather than the building.

The church do a lot to help in the community. Churches as buildings host prayer meetings, Bible studies, Sunday services, youth clubs, toddler groups etc. In the wider community, Christians might run charity events and run projects such as food banks, or work with street pastors.

What is a food bank?

A food bank is a **place where stocks of food**, typically basic provisions and non-perishable items, **are supplied free of charge to people in need**.

Why might the church support the work of food banks?

- Food banks help people in need. This is exactly what Christians believed that **Jesus tried to do** – he healed the sick, fed the hungry and cared for those who needed help.
- Christians believe they should **follow Jesus' example** and do what they can to help others.
- Supporting food banks is a **practical way of offering help** to people in need, and it **shows agape (compassionate love)** to people.

What is an example of a food bank?

A local food bank operates in Brierley Hill. Here is how their website describes the work that they do:

"Black Country Food Bank helps vulnerable individuals and families in crisis

*through the provision of **3 days emergency food supplies while a longer-term solution is***

***developed**. The services we provide have an enormous impact on the people who use them, giving them an important breathing space at a time of great need".*



What is a street pastor?

Street pastors are **Christian adults** with a **concern for their community**, who undergo **training** in order to **voluntarily patrol the streets of towns and cities at night**, helping and **caring for people** in practical ways.

What do street pastors do?

- Street pastors **do not have the power to enforce the law** but they provide a **reassuring presence** in local communities.
- Initially, the main idea was to **challenge gang culture and the use of knives and guns** in some areas of London.
- As Christians began their own groups, the focus became wider and now includes responding to **drunkenness, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime**.
- Street pastors aim to **help and care for vulnerable people** in practical ways, working closely with the council and local police.
- They wear a **blue, reflective 'street pastor' uniform**, and they are there to provide a positive service to their community, but not actively preach about Christianity.
- They **might listen to people's problems, give guidance themselves, or give advice** on agencies that can help with problems. They might do practical things like give out flip flops and bottles of water, or help people to get a taxi home.



The place of mission, evangelism and Church growth

- There are estimated to be between 1.5-2.5 billion Christians in the world. Up to a third of the world's population claim some sort of Christian faith.
- The church is still growing in South America, Africa and Asia but is not really growing in the USA and Europe.
- Christians believe they should help the church to grow by telling other people about Christianity.
- By doing this, they are following what Jesus taught in the **Great Commission**, when he said: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' Matthew 28 v 19-20
- Christians believe that the Holy Spirit gives them the gifts and courage needed to carry out the Great Commission, and that all **Christians have a duty to spread the gospel** (to spread the word about Jesus) and tell others about their faith.



- Some people do this by becoming missionaries or evangelists, meaning that they **promote Christianity, perhaps in foreign countries**. This might be by preaching or doing **charity work**.
- The aim of missionary and evangelist work is to **persuade people to accept Jesus' crucifixion for their sins**, and his resurrection.

Missionary: a person sent on a religious mission, especially to promote Christianity in a foreign country through preaching or charitable work

Evangelism: Spreading the word of Christianity

Case Study: The Alpha Course

- An example of evangelism in Britain
- Started in London in 1990
- Used today as an introduction for those interested in learning about Christianity.
- Christians may invite their non-Christian friends along as a way of fulfilling the Great Commission.
- Their website says: 'Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe, and everyone's welcome. It runs in cafés, churches, universities, homes—you name it. No two Alphas look the same, but generally they have three key things in common: food, a talk and good conversation'.



The importance of the worldwide Church

Reconciliation: restoring harmony after relationships have broken down

Persecution: being treated badly, especially because of political or religious beliefs

- Christians believe that **reconciliation** is important in 2 ways:
 - 1) They need to repair the relationship between humans and God. Human sin has caused a gap between God and humans, so, by asking for forgiveness and accepting that Jesus died for their sins, Christians can get closer to God again.
 - 2) They need to repair the relationship between different groups of people, including Christians. In the news there has been lots of examples of fighting and conflict, even between groups of Christians such as Catholics and Protestants. Christians believe they should work to bring peace and harmony between all people
- Key beliefs such as agape, or Jesus' command to 'Love your neighbour' support the need for reconciliation.
- Christians also believe they should show a peaceful response to **persecution**. In some countries, Christians are treated very badly for their faith, even being tortured or killed for being a Christian.
- Christians believe that they can take the positives from suffering, for example it might bring them closer to God as they understand more about the suffering Jesus went through. It might also strengthen their faith as they have to rely on God more.
- If a Christian knows that others are being persecuted, they might support the work of charities such as the Barnabas Fund, a group who send financial support to projects that help those suffering from persecution.
- They should try to respond in a peaceful, practical way, showing agape even to those

who are carrying out the persecution. Jesus taught: 'do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also'. By this he meant that Christians should not retaliate.

Christian Aid

For more than 70 years, Christian Aid have provided **humanitarian relief and long-term development support for poor communities worldwide**, while highlighting suffering, **tackling injustice** and **championing people's rights**.



- As a Christian organisation, they believe everyone is created in the image of God and deserves respect and care, and the opportunity to live a life of **peace, dignity and worth**.
- They work for and with people of all faiths and none, as well as with churches and other organisations, to **promote sustainable development, strive for social justice and pursue our vision of a world without poverty**.
- In 37 countries, they **support poor and marginalised people**, whatever their beliefs, sexuality, gender and ethnicity, to lift themselves out of poverty.
- They do this by **tackling both the causes and the symptoms of poverty** so that everyone can achieve equality, dignity and freedom.



Overseas work

- Christian Aid send volunteers into countries that have experienced natural disasters. On their website they have a number of links encouraging people to donate money to help people in areas such as Africa and Asia. They also work on the ground in countries, helping to rebuild houses and workplaces that have been affected by flooding, mudslides, earthquakes etc.
- They also work to support those in poverty overseas, or those who do not have equal rights. They work with global leaders to bring equality, and they educate people overseas in how to stand up for their rights.

Christian Aid Week

Every year, the charity organise a week of fundraising where people come together from all walks of life to step out in support of the world's poorest communities.

For more than 60 years, they have organised thousands of Christian Aid Week events such as house-to-house collections, sponsored walks, church collections, taking part in Big Brekkies, abseils and quiz nights



Sample Exam Questions

Which one of the following is the sacrament that commemorates Jesus' last supper? (1)
A Baptism B Marriage C Eucharist D Sunday

Give two examples of the work of the Church in the local community. (2)

Explain two contrasting ways in which the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is celebrated in Christianity. (4)

Explain two ways in which Christian street pastors carry out their Christian duty. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5)

'The best way for Christians to reach an understanding of God is by practising prayer.'
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should: refer to Christian teaching give reasoned arguments to support this statement give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view reach a justified conclusion. (12)

Which one of the following is not a way that Christians celebrate the festival of Easter? (1)
A Nativity Play B Lighting a candle C Painting Easter Eggs D A sunrise service

Give two ways in which Christian churches respond to persecution. (2)

Explain two contrasting examples of Christian pilgrimage. (4)

Explain two ways in which a worldwide Christian relief organisation carries out its mission overseas. Refer to sacred writing or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer. (5)

'Private worship has more meaning for a Christian than public worship.' Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

Refer to Christian teaching.

Give reasoned arguments to support this statement

Give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view

Reach a justified conclusion. (12)