



**HODDER**  
EDUCATION

# MY REVISION NOTES

AQA GCSE (9–1) RELIGIOUS STUDIES A  
CHRISTIANITY, BUDDHISM AND THE THEMES

# AQA

## GCSE (9–1)

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES A

## CHRISTIANITY, BUDDHISM AND THE THEMES

Component 1: The study of religions

- + Christianity
- + Buddhism

Component 2: Religious, philosophical and ethical studies themes A–F



Jan Hayes



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# 1.1 Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

## The qualities of God

REVISED

There are many qualities of God. This course seeks that you recognise and can explain a number of them, so questions could be asked specifically about these terms. The key qualities you must know are **omnipotence**, **all-loving** and **just**. If you know other characteristics that is good as you can use that knowledge in some of your answers.

### Qualities of God evidenced in the Bible

- 1 Omnipotence means God is all-powerful. God can do anything because of this power. It does not mean God can do the impossible (such as create a mountain that God could not then move). Evidence includes:
  - + the creation of the world (**Genesis**)
  - + miracles performed by Jesus, for example calming a storm on the sea, raising Jairus' daughter from the dead
  - + the resurrection of Jesus, which shows power over death.
- 2 All-loving means what it says – God loves all, without exception and without prejudice. Even a bad person is loved by God, which suggests that even bad people can be redeemed and reconciled to God. Evidence includes:
  - + sacrificing his own son to make atonement for the sins of humans
  - + parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32)
  - + Jesus' teachings, for example Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 43–45, 48).
- 3 Just means that God is fair and will not act unjustly. God will give everyone equal value and rights, without prejudice or favour.
  - + For Christians, it is important to believe God is just because they believe all will be judged after death. In the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31–46), Jesus talks about that just judgement.
  - + In the Book of Job, it states that God will not act unjustly. 'God is fair and just' (Psalm 25:8).

### Other characteristics

Other characteristics of God include that he is all-knowing (omniscient) – God is the supreme being so must be omniscient. St Anselm said that if God exists, he must be the 'greatest conceivable being', which means the most intelligent. Being all-powerful and all-knowing means God could create the world.

God is also eternal – he created the world, so must have existed before it did, and is outside space and time, controlled by neither, so must be eternal as time does not impact on God. This also makes him transcendent, which emphasises how different God is to humans and how humans cannot hope to fully understand the nature of God.

Finally, God is immanent – involved in the world. Jesus is an example of this, as are miracles, which are a sign of God at work within the world.

#### Influences

As a Christian my belief in God influences my life because I know he has the ability to do anything so he can look after me in all situations and as he is all-loving I know he won't give me more than I can cope with and everything has a reason.

**All-loving:** God's love is without prejudice and without limit; the sacrifice made through Jesus evidences this love.

**Just:** fair; God is always fair in his treatment, he will be fair at the Judgement.

**Omnipotence:** all-powerful; God created the world, revealing his power. Nothing can ultimately defeat God's power.

#### Revision tip

Learn all key terms – you could be asked what they mean, or find a question which relies on you knowing one of them. There is a glossary on page 61, which gives all the Specification key terms – the minimum you should know.

#### Activity

##### Fix it!

A student wrote this answer. Improve it for them.

*Explain how believing that God is omnipotent might influence a Christian today. (4 marks)*

*They might say that it makes them feel safer because they know God loves them so much, he will look after them. In a difficult situation, they would know God was by their side and helping them.*

# The Trinity

REVISED

Like some other religions, Christians believe there is only One God; however, Christians fundamentally differ from other monotheistic religions in believing that God is revealed in three distinct ways, eternally as a unity of three 'Persons'. This is called the **Trinity**, or Godhead:

- + God the Father – loving creator and sustainer of the universe.
- + God the Son – saviour who became incarnate (human), lived, was crucified and then resurrected, namely Jesus Christ.
- + God the Holy Spirit – source of strength which Christians find at work in their hearts.

The Trinity is referred to in all Christian ceremonies, for example baptism (I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit). It is part of basic statements of belief, such as the Apostles' Creed. Many hymns and prayers mention it.

## Why is the Trinity important?

It is God, and the religion is based on that concept. Symbols, such as the shamrock and triskelion, demonstrate the concept in an easy way.

It helps Christians gain some understanding of God, who really is beyond the understanding of humans, and it makes best sense of what is written in the Bible.

### Now test yourself

TESTED

- 1 What is meant by the Trinity?
- 2 Why is it important for Christians?

**Trinity:** the belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

### Influences

As a Christian, believing in the Trinity influences my life because I have a way to visualise God in my mind when actually God is a really hard concept to describe. Also the act of God sending his son – showing this ultimate act of love encourages me to try to always show love to others even when it might put me at a disadvantage.

# The problem of evil and suffering

REVISED

## What is the problem?

Christians believe that God is omnipotent, **omniscient**, **benevolent** and **absolute**. They believe this as a fact – God does exist. Christians, from their experience and knowledge, realise that there is suffering in the world. Some of the suffering is caused by humans (deliberately and accidentally), which is moral evil. Some is caused by nature – suffering is a fact of the world humans live in – which is natural evil.

The problem is why, if God exists, he allows humans, especially seemingly good and/or innocent ones, to suffer. He must know about it, has the power to prevent/end it, and loves humans unconditionally. So why does God allow the evils which cause suffering?

## Some solutions

Some suggestions that have been offered up to explain this dilemma include:

- + Moral evil: the devil tempts people (e.g. Adam and Eve); humans have free will, which they abuse and so hurt others.
- + Natural evil: suffering is allowed as a punishment for wrong-doing; it is a test of faith to strengthen the soul, for example the story of Job; it is needed so that we can appreciate good, that acts as a balance; it is an education – we learn to help others and look after our world by seeing/experiencing suffering.

No attempt at a solution solves the problem completely. Most Christians say that humans must just accept the suffering, as humans cannot possibly understand God and his purposes, but he does provide ways of understanding

**Absolute:** unchanging, eternal.

**Benevolent:** all-loving; unconditional love.

**Omniscient:** all-knowing; knowledge without limits.

and living with it. God is just, so the fairness of all will be made clear at the end of days. Most important is that humans respond positively to suffering, for example by helping others, as Jesus told in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31–46).

### Now test yourself

TESTED 

- 1 Give two solutions to the problem of evil and suffering.
- 2 Explain two ways in which a belief in evil and suffering influences Christians today.

## Creation

REVISED 

Christians hold various beliefs about creation:

- + God pre-existed the world, hence being able to create it.
- + God is transcendent (outside space and time). As such he created the world and is not controlled by it.
- + Genesis describes the creation: 1:1: 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.'
- + John 1:1–3 opens with: '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.'
- + God created through his word – 'Let there be light', for example; 'Let there be space between the water and the heavens' and so on.
- + The term Word is linked to Jesus: 'The Word became flesh and lived for a while amongst us.' This second person of the Trinity is being referred to as both the Word and the Son of God (Jesus). Hence God and Jesus are ONE.
- + The Trinity is also part of the creation: 'the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters.' This is the third person, the Holy Spirit. So God, Son and Holy Spirit are ONE.
- + To conclude, therefore, all parts of the Trinity were involved in creation, so must have pre-existed it.

### Genesis creation story

Genesis 1 teaches us that in the beginning there was nothing. He created (in order) - light, sky, land/sea/vegetation, sun/moon/stars, fish and birds, animals and humans. On the seventh day he rested. He saw that all 'was good'.

## Genesis and its importance

The key points are that Christians believe the message within Genesis 1 is true. The world was planned, ordered and sustained by God. Human lives have purpose and meaning because God created those lives and humans are made in the image of God so all humans are of value.

Humans have a responsibility to treat each other equally. Humans were made stewards of the world to look after it.

## Different interpretations

- 1 Genesis is literally true – every word is the word of God; God dictated the book and is totally correct. It happened as it says it happened. God is all-powerful and all-knowing, capable of doing all this in seven days.
- 2 Genesis does contain truth but it was not dictated. God inspired the writers – so if there are errors in the story, they are human errors. While generally correct, within the story, elements can be reinterpreted – does 'day' mean 'our day' or 'a period of time', for example?
- 3 Genesis was written by a person whose sense of God in the world inspired them to write. It is a man-made document. The point of the story is to give the messages that God is a loving God, we have a place in the world, and the world is a good place. It is a myth with an important message.

Each one of these has religious truths. Each way may influence a Christian slightly differently but essentially the messages are the same.

### Influences

As a Christian, knowing that God created the world for us influences me to feel really special that he made me in his image. It also lets me understand my world is ordered and planned and I believe I have a purpose to being here and I must make the most of being here ... sort of making God proud of me.

# Afterlife

REVISED

Death separates life on earth (temporary) from life with God (eternal) – it is not something to be feared. Christians believe they will reunite with the dead, thus easing the pain of bereavement.

The Book of Revelations says God will wipe every tear – there will be no more death or crying or pain.

## Afterlife for Christians

Belief in the **resurrection** is important to Christians. Resurrection means that the dead will be raised to life because of what Jesus taught and that he himself overcame death. St Paul said this was central to Christian belief.

### What Christians mean by resurrection

Christians believe God will resurrect them before Judgement Day. Jesus told people that the new mode of existence would be different from the earthly one. On earth it is perishable; it is raised imperishable (a spiritual body). There is continuity between the person's earthly life and the resurrected life.

**Roman Catholics** believe in purgatory, a state between death and the afterlife. After death of the body, the soul goes to purgatory if it is destined for heaven, where it is purified enough to enter heaven.

There are different views about resurrection. Many Christians simply say humans have no answers – only to trust in God. Without scientific evidence it is all a matter of belief based in Bible teachings and Jesus' words.

## Judgement

Jesus taught that God's love and mercy are unconditional and that God is just. At the end of time on the Day of Judgement all souls (Christian or not) will be judged by Jesus. The parables – the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Sheep and Goats – are Judgement teachings. Jesus will come to judge both the living and the dead. A person needs to personally accept God's offer of mercy.

Others reject the idea of a second coming of Christ. Jesus was just trying to express something that humans simply cannot understand. Humans will account for their actions, but no one knows how or when.

## Heaven and hell

Christians use earthly images to explain their understanding of heaven.

People often see heaven in a way they see their present lives. It is often described in a way that would appeal to them now, for example those in poverty describe it as a land of milk, honey and plenty.

The Bible paints a picture of hell via the metaphor of an unquenchable fire. This idea was historically used to frighten people into obeying Church rules. Hell is now seen as eternal separation from God. It is neither decided by God nor what God wants – humans choose it by turning away from God.

Some Christians embrace universalism – they believe everyone will eventually respond to God's love, having repented and been forgiven.

**Resurrection:** the physical return of Jesus on the third day after he died.

**Roman Catholic:** the largest Christian group based in Rome and led by the Pope.

### Influences

The afterlife for me as a Christian influences my life in that I know that God will be my ultimate judge. If I live a Christian life and believe in Jesus then heaven is open to me. Secondly, as there is an afterlife, it gives me hope and comfort that this life is not the end and God is waiting for me.

### Now test yourself

- 1 How does belief in Judgement Day affect people in their lives today?
- 2 How might the existence of heaven and/or hell influence Christians in their lives?
- 3 Give two reasons why Christians might disagree about judgement.
- 4 What do Christians mean by the word resurrection?

TESTED

His incarnation – Jesus the Son

Central to Christian belief is the idea that God the Son took on human form as Jesus. John 1:14 says ‘the Word became flesh and lived amongst us’. Christians believe Jesus was fully God and fully human – truly the Son of God. If Christians acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, God lives in them.

**Incarnation:** God in human form; Jesus.

**Messiah:** the anointed one who is seen as the saviour by Christians.

**Salvation:** the saving of the soul from sin; includes through grace and spirit.

Jesus: Son of God	Jesus' knowledge	Importance of belief in incarnation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ The title 'Son of God' is used about Jesus in the New Testament.</li><li>+ Mary was a virgin who conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit.</li><li>+ Some Christians accept the virgin birth as true whereas others suggest it is more a metaphor to show that Jesus was both human and divine.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ If fully divine, Jesus should have had full knowledge of what was happening, yet at times his knowledge was limited – e.g. he said he didn't understand fully about the end of the world.</li><li>+ This can be explained by saying that to become fully human he had to give up some of his divine knowledge – a great sacrificial act. He came as a servant but was still fully God in his relationship with and understanding of God.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ It helps Christians understand the extent of God's love for humanity – Jesus had to become human to be able to make reconciliation with God possible through his life being sacrificed as a payment for human sin.</li><li>+ It shows how Christians should live – as God so loved us so we should love one another (1 John 4:11).</li><li>+ Many Christians have taken on this act of selfless love – consider Mother Teresa.</li></ul>

<p><b>Crucifixion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ Jesus' work on earth lasted about three years, then he was arrested, tried and crucified.</li><li>+ Convicted of blasphemy by the Jewish authorities, he was put to death for treason under Roman law.</li><li>+ He was crucified at Golgotha – the place of the skull. It took six hours for him to die. Mark records that for three hours the Earth was dark, perhaps symbolic of the judgement on Israel for its rejection of the <b>Messiah</b>.</li><li>+ Matthew and Mark's Gospels say that Jesus questioned: 'God, why have you forsaken me?' (this is also a quotation from Psalm 22:1)</li><li>+ Mark says that at the point of death, the temple curtain tore in two – believed by some to show that Jesus' death had destroyed the barrier of sin that separated humans from God, therefore making it possible to access God.</li></ul>	<p><b>Why he had to die</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ At the time – Jesus' teachings gave a new understanding of the Torah, which brought him into direct conflict with Jewish leaders.</li><li>+ At the time – the Roman governor was under pressure to keep a peaceful land, so came down hard on any religious rebellion. When Jewish leaders implied Jesus was stirring up trouble, the governor had to act.</li><li>+ In Christian thought – Jesus had to die to fulfil God's plan. Without his death humans could not be reunited with God and enter heaven. Jesus atoned for the sins of humanity, bringing God and humans back together.</li></ul> <p><b>Salvation and reconciliation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ God gave his only son so that humans could be saved in eternal life (<b>salvation</b>).</li><li>+ Jesus' death atoned (made up for) human sin by bearing its just penalty on the cross.</li><li>+ This was God reconciling with his people. He is so loving and merciful he made forgiveness possible through his own son.</li><li>+ Christians work for reconciliation with others in the world today.</li></ul>
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Now test yourself

TESTED

- 1 What is the incarnation?
- 2 Why did Jesus have to die?
- 3 What is salvation?

# Resurrection

REVISED

## What happened to Jesus?

This is recorded in the New Testament in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Joseph (of Arimathea) was given permission to take Jesus' body down from the cross. Joseph was allowed by Pontius Pilate (the Roman governor) to bury Jesus in a rock tomb he owned. However, the burial rites were delayed as it was the Sabbath day of rest. When the women returned on the Sunday morning, they found the stone rolled away. All three Gospel writers say that the body had gone and the women were told Jesus had 'risen'.

Mark says a man in white tells the women to return to Galilee to meet the risen Jesus.

John says a man reveals himself to Mary Magdalene as Jesus himself come back to life and she returns to the disciples to say 'she had seen the risen Jesus'.

All this is followed by 'resurrection appearances' recorded in Matthew, Luke and John only. During the next 40 days when he appeared he was not always recognised at first but the physical nature of his 'appearances' is always stressed.

## The impact of the Resurrection

The disciples turned from men in hiding to going out spreading Jesus' message. This put them in great danger, indicating that something significant had happened. Peter, for example, went from being terrified, so that he denied he even knew Jesus to teaching his message openly. Seeing the risen Jesus was what caused these transformations.

## What happened next?

On the 40th day after the resurrection some texts describe 'the **Ascension** of Jesus'. At Bethany, Jesus blessed his disciples before being taken up to heaven – 'a cloud received him from their sight' (Acts). This was the successful completion of his mission and return to God.

## How does Jesus' resurrection influence Christians today?

It is the central element of Christian belief – if Jesus simply died then he is no different to others who may have died for their beliefs or as punishment for going against the authorities. Christians believe resurrection is the proof Jesus is the Son of God – showing how God triumphed over evil and death.

This victory over death opens up heaven for Christians. Jesus' sacrifice overcame sin, reconciled humanity with God and offered eternal life.

### Revision tip

It is more important to know why the resurrection was important and questions raised about it than knowing the narrative. There is some debate about whether Jesus actually 'rose from the dead'.

**Ascension:** Jesus being taken up to heaven on the 40th day of Easter.

### Influences

This for me makes my faith complete. Jesus' resurrection makes him different to anyone else and so I know this is the true faith. I also know that if Jesus can overcome death as a human, like me, then so can I and I can enter heaven as Jesus did. Jesus showed us his Father's power by what he did.

The story of 'original sin' is in Genesis – Adam and Eve are tempted by the devil to eat from the tree of good and evil (the only tree in the whole garden to have been forbidden). Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden as punishment.

Many Christians believe humans were all descended from Adam and Eve. Tainted by this act, all humans have an inbuilt tendency to disobey God and to face God's just penalty for sin.

Sin separates humans from God, bringing eternal punishment. As humans are full of sin, so only God can rectify this problem. Christians believe God offered salvation through the sacrifice of Christ.

Most Christians do not take the Genesis story literally. To many, it conveys the message that humanity has the inclination to do what they are told not to (hence disobeying God), which damages their relationship with him.

### Influences

I always know that God loves me, even though often I don't deserve it. So I show love to others regardless. I feel that I have the Holy Spirit within me. I try to act in a way that reflects this gift in me. But I know sin is so easy to do and often the right way is the most difficult so I have to be conscious of this.

## Salvation and what it means for Christians

Salvation means being forgiven by God and being assured of eternal life.

### 1 Salvation through law:

- + In Jesus' time, Jewish teachings emphasised that 'obeying the law' was the way to salvation.
- + Some Christians believe in salvation through work – the idea that a right relationship with God has to be earned.
- + Some Christians think salvation can be earned through obedience to God's laws; others take on Jesus' idea that God was more pleased with the thoughts in our minds and the love in our hearts for him and others. Christians need to put these thoughts into action in their lives.

### 2 Salvation through grace:

- + **Grace** is the unconditional love that God has for all humans. God's love is there despite everything humans do – it need not be earned.
- + God shows his love in the gift of salvation to all who believe in Jesus as the Son of God.
- + Salvation through grace and spirit is made possible through Jesus' **atonement** death. Jesus' actions made possible the forgiveness for the sins of the world, leading to reconciliation.
- + Christians believe they receive God's grace through the presence in their hearts of the Holy Spirit. This allows them to try to show love as Jesus did.
- + Many people today believe that 'the grace of God' helps them every day and that 'acts of God's grace' are seen in the world daily.

**Atonement:** means making amends for sin.

Christians believe that Jesus' death was the atonement for humankind's sins. It allowed God and humans to be reconciled, so humans could go to heaven. Jesus had a role in salvation – to die as atonement, or sacrifice, for the salvation of all souls.

**Original sin:** belief that everyone born carries the sins of their forefathers.

### Activity

#### Continue the answer

This is half of a 4-mark answer. Write the other half giving a second way. Use it as a model in answering these types of questions in your exam.

*Explain two ways in which belief in 'salvation through grace' might influence Christians today. (4 marks)*

*One way that belief in salvation through grace could influence Christians today is to try and help others that are in need. This shows their love for others as Jesus showed his love for them. It is by the grace of the Holy Spirit in their hearts which enables them to carry out such actions.*

Try another:

*Explain two ways in which belief in 'sin' might influence Christians today. (4 marks)*

## Exam practice

What questions on this section look like:

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

This page contains a range of questions that could be on an exam paper. Practise them all to strengthen your knowledge and technique while revising. Check back to pages 11-12 to see the marking grids that examiners use: this will help you to mark your answers.

- 1 Which part of Jesus' life is referred to by the term 'incarnation'?  
 (a) his baptism      (b) his birth      (c) his death      (d) his rising from the dead [1]
- 2 Which of the Gospels refers to the 'role of the word' in creation?  
 (a) John      (b) Luke      (c) Mark      (d) Matthew [1]
- 3 Give two Christian teachings about the Creation. [2]
- 4 Give two Christian beliefs about heaven. [2]
- 5 Give two reasons Jesus' death is important for Christians. [2]
- 6 Explain two ways in which belief in the resurrection of Jesus influences Christians today. [4]
- 7 Explain two ways in which belief in God being just influences Christians today. [4]
- 8 Explain two ways in which belief in the creation story influences Christians today. [4]
- 9 Explain two ways in which belief in heaven influences Christians today. [4]
- 10 Explain two Christian teachings about the role of Christ in salvation. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teachings in your answer. [5]
- 11 Explain two Christian teachings about the Incarnation. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teachings in your answer. [5]
- 12 Explain two Christian teachings about the nature of God. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teachings in your answer. [5]
- 13 'For Christians, the crucifixion of Jesus is more important than his resurrection.' 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]
- 14 'God cannot be all-loving because evil and suffering exist.' 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]
- 15 The 'Creation was so long ago it does not matter what actually happened.' 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]

## Exam tip

Level 2 students write in a very limited way. They often write only a few words or a single sentence – no matter how many marks a question is worth. They also miss out questions. If this is you, then part of the problem is having too little knowledge – get notes which work for you, learn revision techniques which work for you, and use them. You will then have more to be able to say in the exam.

Level 5 students write in sentences and paragraphs. They usually try to extend their writing in all their answers. However, they may write less fluently than higher grade students and so the quality is not so good. If this is you, you need to learn and understand the topics better – that gives you more to write from, and when we have confidence in our understanding, we write better and fuller answers.

Level 8 students write fluently and in good, detailed English. Their work flows, using connectives and paragraphing well to give an impression of having good command of the subject.

# 1.2 Christianity: Practices

## Worship

REVISED

There are many forms of informal worship across the different Christian groups.

Worship is an act devoted to God to show love and reverence for God. Christians believe that when they worship God, God speaks back through the Bible, sermon and sacraments. Most Christians hold acts of worship, or services, on Sunday of every week as a communal show of devotion. There are different types of worship.

### What is liturgical worship?

**Liturgical worship** is found in the Roman Catholic, **Orthodox** and Church of England (Anglican) churches. The services follow a liturgy – a set pattern – usually from a printed book. The liturgy has an established structure (order) of set prayers and readings, with the congregation repeating key phrases.

Hymns are sung at set times (hymns vary) and a sermon (speech) is given. Some of the prayers, the hymns chosen, the Bible readings and the sermon differ from service to service.

The ordered nature makes worshippers feel comfortable and part of the process.

### What is non-liturgical worship?

**Non-liturgical worship** is a more informal way of worship. It follows a pattern or order but the elements are tailored to each service. Prayers are often in the leader's own words, the sermon on a topical theme and Bible readings chosen to fit.

Without set words, worshippers feel it comes more from the heart.

### What is charismatic worship?

**Charismatic worship** is a kind of informal worship. **Evangelical worship** is often in this style.

The service has recognisable characteristics (hymns, prayers, sermon, readings) but is very free-flowing. Charismatic is 'Spirit inspired' – people often speak in tongues or feel the Holy Spirit at work within them.

### How is the Bible used in worship?

The Bible is always the focus of any act of worship because it is considered either the 'word of God' or 'inspired by God'.

The Bible can be processed into church, many hymns are based on it, portions are often read out loud and the sermon often explains a Bible passage.

#### Key quotes

'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.' James 4:10

'But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship him.' John 4:23

#### Charismatic worship:

(informal) worship that is free-flowing and lacks structure.

#### Evangelical worship:

worship stressing the teaching of Jesus, personal conversion experiences, scripture and evangelism to others.

#### Liturgical worship:

worship that follows a set pattern (liturgy).

#### Non-liturgical worship:

worship that follows a changeable structure.

**Orthodox:** a branch of the Christian church with its origins in Greece and Russia.

# Private worship

REVISED

This is just as important as public worship for Christians. It can be liturgical – for example, Roman Catholics may say the Angelus (a series of short meditations performed three times a day) – or non-liturgical – for example, a simple prayer at a time of need. Worshipping alone allows the person to feel close to God in exactly the way they want. It is a time to ‘be with God’, say things from the ‘heart’ and build a ‘relationship’ with God.

A rosary is a set of beads on a string with a crucifix on the end. Believers thread the beads through the fingers while saying set prayers (the **Lord’s Prayer**, the Hail Mary, etc.).

Meditation, meanwhile, is mainly silent thought. It could be reflection on a Bible passage or religious truth. A sense of peace and calm is a key characteristic, alternating with the hustle of daily life.

## Prayer

Prayer is both talking and listening to God – to be open to guidance from the Holy Spirit. It should include praise, confession, thanks, prayers for others and then the self.

Jesus spoke about prayer – humility and honesty are essential. He stated that an all-loving God would always respond to sincere prayers. Outcomes are not always in the way Christians seek, however – God knows best.

Set prayers (e.g. the Lord’s Prayer) are used both publicly and privately.

## Why it is important to worship

God wants people to worship him. Worship can bring a sense of connection/togetherness with God to a community and/or an individual. It is an external expression of internal faith.

Through worship people gain a deeper understanding of their religion or of their faith in God. It strengthens the worshipper’s faith and deepens their understanding, making them spiritually fit for what they do.

## The Lord’s Prayer

This is important as it is the prayer Jesus taught his disciples when he was asked by them ‘Master, how should we pray?’

- 1 Know what each line of the prayer means (find a copy and jot down notes against each line).
- 2 You don’t need to learn it off by heart, as any questions based on this prayer should give you the part you need to comment on.
- 3 It has praise, thanks, confession and asking God for the things the worshipper and others need – so it’s a ‘perfect prayer’.
- 4 As it was given by Jesus, it links back throughout the history of Christianity.
- 5 It can be used in public or private worship, out loud or silently.
- 6 It is usually part of all types of worship.

**Lord’s Prayer:** the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to show them how to pray.

### Revision tip

Questions with 4 marks should focus on similarities/differences or contrasts in religious practice. Make sure you know the similarities/differences:

- 1 Between the different types of worship – liturgical/non-liturgical/charismatic or informal/formal.
- 2 Between public and private prayers – what they are/how they are done.
- 3 Between the importance for the believers of the types of worship/prayers.

### Now test yourself

TESTED

- 1 Describe the three different types of Christian worship.
- 2 Why is prayer important for Christians?
- 3 Explain why the Lord’s Prayer is so important to Christians.

Sacrament	Outward and visible sign	Inward and spiritual grace
Baptism	Water and the signing of the cross with the words – in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit	Receiving the Holy Spirit The removal of original sin Entry into the kingdom of God/the Church
Confirmation	The laying on of hands by the bishop	Strengthening/sealing the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the person Becoming an 'adult' member of the Church
Eucharist	Bread and wine	Spiritual 'feeding' with the body and blood of Christ
Reconciliation	Words of forgiveness	The forgiveness of sins Rebuilding of bonds
Healing	Anointing and the laying on of hands	Spiritual and sometimes physical healing Preparation for death
Marriage	Ring(s)	The endless love between the couple
Ordination	The laying on of hands by the bishop	The special gifts of the Holy Spirit needed by a deacon or priest

**Baptism:** the sacrament by which people become members of the Church.

**Eucharist:** bread and wine ceremony in the Anglican church.

**Protestant:** a branch of the Christian church that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church.

## Sacrament:

- + The external and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.
- + Can be experienced with the senses.
- + Has a deeper meaning which is not experienced through the senses.

**Protestants** acknowledge two **sacraments**: **baptism** and the **Eucharist**. They are known as Gospel sacraments because they were authorised by Jesus and there are many references to their use in much of the New Testament.

Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians and some Anglicans have seven sacraments, all of which are implied through Jesus and the early church.

## The importance for those who observe them

Christians believe God imparts gifts through the sacraments. They are offered at appropriate times in a person's life (like rites of passage) – baptism, confirmation and marriage.

In the Eucharist the bread and wine unites Christians with the risen Christ. Reconciliation helps Christians realise what they have done wrong, show penitence and then receive forgiveness through the priest's words.

Healing can be given during a long illness or when a person is near to death to give strength and peace of mind.

Ordination separates those who devote their lives to God in the priesthood, giving them gifts to carry out this role.

## Why some Christians do not believe in sacraments

Quakers and members of the Salvation Army reject all sacraments – no direct reference is made to most of the seven in the Bible.

They believe Jesus did not intend either baptism or his words and actions over the bread and wine at the Last Supper to become prescribed rituals. They believe that God speaks directly to the believer's heart so there is no need of any form of 'go-between', and that symbols and ritual distract from true religion.

## Revision tip

Definitions of these words could be required as a 1-mark multi-choice question.

For 2-mark questions you could be asked about reasons why certain Christians see the sacraments as important, or to name two of them.

There are many differences to refer to if you are asked about how different groups view the sacraments as a 4-mark question.

Some Christians do not believe in sacraments so this could be the focus of an evaluation ('The sacraments are not important'). Or it could focus on which is most important.

So this topic could appear in a variety of question types – it is worth learning carefully.

# Baptism

REVISED

According to Christian tradition, John the Baptist was the first Jewish figure to use baptism to symbolise the 'forgiveness of sins'. This prepared for a new way of life with the coming of the Messiah (Jesus). Jesus was baptised by John and the Holy Spirit entered his life. Jesus' last instructions were to 'baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism welcomes a person into the Christian community. It is practised by almost all Christian communities today.

## Baptism ceremonies today

Baptism is important as Christians feel they are doing what Jesus did so it connects them to him. It welcomes a person into the Christian church. Baptism removes sin and enables spiritual growth.

### Infant baptism

Actual ceremonies differ from one Christian group to the next. However, the services have core similarities.

Key elements for Roman Catholics, Orthodox and the Church of England are:

- + baptism of a baby
- + use of **holy water** from the font and poured three times over the forehead
- + the sign of the cross made on the forehead in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Many baptism services also include promises made by parents/godparents on behalf of the child to reject evil, repent sins and turn to Christ; the lighting of a pascal candle, which symbolises receiving the light of Christ; the use of holy oils to symbolise strength (to fight evil) and salvation; and readings and prayers.

### Believers' baptism

This is a ceremony for older children and adults, which takes places in a baptistery. The central rituals are the use of water and the Trinitarian formula (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

The subject testifies to why they seek baptism, then declares the repentance of sin and their intention to follow a Christ-centred life, avoiding evil.

Walking down three steps symbolises the end of the old life of sin. Then there are three full submersions in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The person then leaves by three other steps to start a new life as a Christian.

### Revision tip

Know the basic elements of each baptism. You could be asked to explain two differences or two similarities between ceremonies. You could be asked to give two reasons why baptism is important or two **gifts given by the Holy Spirit**. Equally, a question option could be an evaluation based on baptism (which type is more important, whether baptism is necessary, is it the most important sacrament?).

### Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

knowledge, courage, understanding, right judgement, wisdom, reverence, awe and wonder in God's presence – 1 Corinthians 12.

**Holy Water:** used in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican Churches, this is water that has been blessed by having a prayer said over it by a religious leader.

Support for infant baptism	Support for believers' baptism
Natural for parents to want to bring their child into the Christian faith	Only those old enough to understand should take this step – should be able to make their own promises
Gifts of the Holy Spirit to allow the child to grow up strong in God's love	A child might grow up to resent the promises made for them so they need to decide for themselves
Enables the child to receive the other sacraments	Jesus was an adult when baptised
Brings comfort to the family of an ill child that if it dies then it will be with God	God's love is not dependent on human actions – so baptism is unnecessary
Removes original sin and purifies the child	How can a child even have sins to remove?

## The Last Supper

The **Last Supper** is the basis of the 'bread and wine' service. Jesus took bread, broke it – 'This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' Jesus took wine – 'This is my blood, do this in remembrance of me.'

Some say the Eucharist is a taste of heaven, unites the worshipper with Christ, and is food for the soul, giving strength to live every day as a Christian.

Christians today re-enact the Last Supper in different ways. It can be done daily, weekly or monthly, as part of, or in addition to, a normal service.

## The Orthodox Divine Liturgy

'Divine' is a reminder of the sacred mystery of the service and 'liturgy' means 'work of the people' in the praising of God.

Bread and wine are prepared on the altar behind the iconostasis. It is divided into four – the Eucharistic prayer said to consecrate three of them so that they coexist with the actual body and blood of Jesus.

The service includes Bible readings, sermon, prayers and the Bible processed through the Royal Doors. The cherubic hymn is sung. The bread and wine are carried through the Royal Doors. The priest invites all baptised members to participate. From one chalice of bread soaked in the wine, spoonfuls are given. The fourth unconsecrated piece of bread is broken up to be taken home.

## The Roman Catholic mass

In a Roman Catholic mass, worshippers confess sins and forgiveness is given. The service includes Bible readings, sermon and prayers, and the Nicene Creed is recited. Bread and wine are brought to the altar and the Eucharistic prayer is said to consecrate them.

The people stand before the priest to receive the bread, which is placed on the tongue or in their hands. Only the priest drinks the wine. The post-Eucharistic prayer and blessings are said.

## Anglican Holy Communion

This follows a similar pattern to that of the Roman Catholics. However, wine is taken by the congregation from one single chalice and the bread is placed on crossed hands – all participate in both bread and wine.

## The Lord's Supper – other Protestant groups

These tend to be much simpler services, with people gathering at the front of the church. The Last Supper story is read out; bread and wine are shared. Often the wine is non-alcoholic and given in little individual cups. Hymns may be sung and the Lord's Prayer and additional prayers may be said by all.

The meaning and significance vary for different Christian groups:

- ✚ Orthodox: the consecration of bread and wine remains a mystery but they believe that Jesus is mystically present in the **elements**.
- ✚ Roman Catholic: believe in **transubstantiation** – the bread and wine are invisibly transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus.
- ✚ Anglicans: some believe the same as the Catholics but most believe that the bread and wine hold the spiritual presence of the body and blood rather than becoming it.
- ✚ Other Protestants believe the bread and wine are purely symbolic of Jesus' death, which brought salvation.

**Elements:** bread and wine used in the Eucharist.

**Last Supper:** the last evening meal Jesus shared with his disciples before he was arrested.

**Transubstantiation:** the change in the bread and wine to become the body and blood of Jesus.

# Pilgrimage

REVISED

A religious pilgrimage is a visit to a holy place. These places often have a feeling of spirituality and of closeness to God. The journey can be as important as the visit.

## Lourdes (France) – history and significance

Bernadette in Lourdes	Pilgrimage to Lourdes	Healings in Lourdes
Here Bernadette Soubirous claimed she had seen a woman, the Virgin Mary, in 18 visions.	Many pilgrims visit <b>Lourdes</b> today – taking part in processions, saying the rosary and mass, touching the walls of the cave (grotto).	Since the first cure in 1858, 69 more Lourdes healings have been miracles declared by the Catholic Church.
In a cave near the River Gave she was told to dig away the growth clogging the spring and drink the water.	Water is often taken home and statues of the Virgin Mary bought.	Most pilgrims not experiencing physical healing still feel as though they have been healed spiritually.
Her friend bathed her dislocated arm in the water and it was healed.	People with sickness or disability go hoping for healing.	Pilgrims also describe feeling peace of mind.

## Iona – history and significance

About Iona	Pilgrimage to Iona today
This is known as the cradle of Christianity in Scotland, as Columba, an Irish monk, settled there in 563 <sup>CE</sup> .	<b>Iona</b> has a very long history, making pilgrims want to visit.
The Gaelic rulers of Ireland gave him Iona to build a monastery and spread the Christian message.	Individuals or groups often go home renewed in their faith to live and work in the modern world.
Columba died in 597 <sup>CE</sup> but the monastery continued, leading to new monasteries in Ireland and Lindisfarne. Many came on pilgrimage via a system of Celtic crosses and processional roads which were built.	A stay at Iona means work as well as worship (and study).
The Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript of the Gospels, was produced.	
Iona fell into disuse, but in 1938 George Macleod had the monastery rebuilt and set up the foundation of the ecumenical Iona Community – open to all Christian groups.	
Their way of life was founded in the Bible – daily prayer, Bible reading, stewardship of time and money, regular meeting with other members and the active promotion of justice, peace and the environment.	

## Importance

A pilgrimage allows focus on faith and a renewed energy to cope with the demands of life, as well as offering time for spiritual growth. Some pilgrimages include very simple living, being closer to the way Jesus led his life. The experience might bring healing, either physical or spiritual.

However, the money could be better spent in helping others, and some people cannot afford to make a pilgrimage. The renewal while on pilgrimage quickly wears off when pilgrims return home. Spiritual development can be gained at home in prayer and reflection – prayers and healings can happen anywhere as God hears all prayers.

### Revision tip

This is a good topic for evaluative questions. List reasons for and against the following:

- 1 Lourdes is the best place for pilgrimage.
- 2 Pilgrimage is the greatest act of devotion in the life of a Christian.
- 3 Pilgrimage is just an excuse for a holiday.
- 4 All Christians should make a pilgrimage to a holy site.

## Key quote

'For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' Isaiah 9:6

## Christmas

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. The specific date is unknown but the Western church chose 25 December and the Eastern church chose 6 January.

The story of Jesus' birth is found only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. These accounts are slightly different in detail if you read Matthew Chapters 1 and 2 and Luke Chapter 2.

The general outline of the story is that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (there because of the Roman census) in a stable as the town was overcrowded. Mary gave birth, laid him in a manger and he was visited by kings/shepherds who had been told that the new King of the Jews/Messiah had been born.

Christians disagree over the accuracy of what happened but the message is key – that the incarnation of God the Son (Jesus) had humble beginnings, thus showing humility.

## Celebration and importance

Christmas is a state holiday in the UK, showing the importance of this event in a 'Christian country'. It is celebrated in a secular way with cards, gifts, food and parties, and in a religious way with the four weeks of advent, the Christingle service, Christmas Eve mass and a Christmas Day service. Christmas carols are sung throughout the period, the birth stories are read and nativities are acted out. Believers often send religious cards (e.g. with a nativity scene, religious wording, etc.). Christians also celebrate with gifts and food.

Christians thank God for his gift of Jesus. They focus on family, children, the poor and lonely to make Christmas a time of warmth, love and togetherness. It is common for churches to set up shelters, host meals and distribute gift parcels for/to the most needy.

It is a time of giving, receiving and of love to symbolise the love that God showed. It is also a time for hope – for peace, reconciliation, love to our fellow humans – and for Christians to show their faith to the world.

## Activity

### Fix it!

Read this answer and improve it.

*Explain two ways in which the celebration of Christmas influences Christians today.* (4 marks)

*Christmas influences Christians to be kind to others (giving). It also influences them to be hopeful that things will get better for the world.*

## Revision tip

Remember, you will not need to recall every detail of the Christmas story, just its key elements. Questions at 4/5/12 marks will focus around the symbolism, importance and influence of the festival, or an evaluation of it.

## Revision tip

Read the stories and jot down some similarities and differences between the birth stories from the Gospels. Also look at the ways the birth stories are celebrated by different Christians today. A simple description of the festival stories or celebration is unlikely to be asked for, but knowing both will help make evaluations much easier to discuss. By writing notes, you are helping your brain retain the information, so it is easier to recall it later.

## Easter

Easter remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday. Each day remembers the events that led to Jesus' death, his actual death and then resurrection.

The stories can be found in Matthew Chapters 21–28, Mark Chapters 11–16, Luke Chapters 19–24 and John Chapters 12–21. From this you can see how much of each Gospel refers to this last week – thus its importance.

The key events are:

- 1 Palm Sunday – Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- 2 Maundy Thursday – the Last Supper and Jesus' arrest.
- 3 Good Friday – Jesus' **crucifixion** and death.
- 4 Easter Sunday – the resurrection.

### Celebration and importance

Special church services run throughout the week remembering the lead-up to 'the greatest sacrifice ever made'. In a secular way people send cards, gifts, Easter chocolates and have family meals. In a religious way for Christians Palm crosses are given out, church services take place for each of the special days, including Easter vigils, and special Easter prayers and hymns are said. Believers send Easter cards.

Christians move from a period of great sadness to great joy knowing what God has done for them (sacrifice of his son to bring about reconciliation). The human suffering of Jesus and his obedience to the will of God are emphasised.

Christians believe that God reunited himself with humanity by the actions of Jesus so that they can once again be reunited with him relationally when we accept Christ and physically in the new heavens and earth – the new covenant.

#### Now test yourself

TESTED 

- 1 What is a sacrament? Name two.
- 2 Why are sacraments important?
- 3 What is a pilgrimage? Name a Christian place.
- 4 Why is pilgrimage important?
- 5 Name a Christian festival. Say what it celebrates.
- 6 Name another Christian festival. Say why it is important.

#### Revision tip

Remember, you will not need to recall every detail of the Easter story, just its key elements. Questions at 4/5/12 marks will focus around the symbolism, importance and influence of the festival, or an evaluation of it.

**Crucifixion:** capital punishment used by the Romans which involves nailing a person to a cross to kill them; Jesus died this way.

#### Revision tip

Festivals could be a topic for 5-mark questions, focusing on two ways in which a chosen festival is important to Christians. You need to be able to back up these ideas with Christian teachings as you have to refer to both teachings and the source of the teaching in your answer for a 5-mark question.

*Explain two ways in which Easter is important for Christians today. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian beliefs and teachings in your answer.*

#### Activity

Which bit of Jesus' life was the most important? Evaluative questions could easily focus on this, for example 'Christmas is more important than Easter'. You would need to refer to the events of his life to answer this. Complete this chart to prepare yourself for any question like that.

Reasons why it is ...	Christmas (birth)	Easter (death)	Easter (resurrection)
Most important			
Not most important			

# The role of the Church in the local community

REVISED

Christians have always been involved in working to make communities better places to live. They work in support groups for the young and old, support charities that help the needy, welcome immigrants, and work as **street pastors** and at **food banks**.

The parable of the sheep and goats teaches that if people fail to help those around them, it is as though they fail to help Jesus himself.

1 John says, 'If anyone has material possessions and ignores his brother in need, how can he love God?' Also, 'Let's not love with words or thoughts but with actions and in truth'.

Jesus spent much of his time helping people in society who were needy or outcasts or simply those who were looked down on by others. He said, 'It is not the well that need a doctor but the sick', showing how we should help those that need help in any way possible. Many Christians use the phrase 'What Would Jesus Do?' as motivation to go and help those in need.

## Food banks and street pastors

At food banks people volunteer to collect and distribute food. In 2005, the Trussell Trust launched its UK-wide network with a vision to end poverty and hunger, show compassion and give practical help.

Many food banks are centred in churches or church halls. People in need are identified by police, schools or social services and given vouchers to exchange for food parcels. The 2020 pandemic saw Food Banks become even more important to even more people.

Street pastors are Christians who go out on city streets at night to care for the physical and spiritual needs of young people who might be affected by excessive drinking, drug use, fighting, etc. They care for, listen and try to help, regardless of the young people's behaviour. Following training, they ask for God's blessing on this difficult type of ministry.

Over 270 towns now have street pastors. Their governing body is the Ascension Trust, which works with local councils, the police and other official bodies. The work is based in places where there may be anticipated issues.

## The Salvation Army

Founded in 1865 in East London, as a result of the deprivation people lived in and the apparent unconcern shown by many Christian churches. The Salvation Army works with the poor and disadvantaged, setting up, for example:

- + food kitchens and hostels for the homeless, including emergency assistance
- + toy collections at Christmas
- + training and employment help and advice.

## St Vincent de Paul Society

This is a Roman Catholic society whose aim is to provide for the great needs of people in society. Its motto is to help the homeless, visit the sick, befriend the lonely and feed the hungry. The society is involved in, for example:

- + setting up support centres and counselling services
- + providing work training
- + helping refugees, released prisoners, people with disabilities and mental health problems.

**Food banks:** places in local communities where people can go and have food if they are in need.

**Street pastors:** a Christian organisation where people work on the streets at night to help people in need.

### Revision tip

Knowing the religious teachings and examples on which Christians base their work will be useful for this topic. Also the emphasis here is on the value of Christians using their faith as a basis for action and the action itself showing that faith. High marks require the use of teachings in an answer.

## Church growth

Christianity has always been a missionary religion, spreading all over the world. African Christian membership is on the rise but in Europe it is in decline. In recent years there has been a renewed focus on preaching to make the Gospel relevant in a modern world. Many churches are trying to find fresh approaches to worship while maintaining their key beliefs.

### The Church Army – committed to Christian mission

Church Army members are trained and licensed by the Church of England to work throughout the UK. They aim to help people find faith, showing their love of God as revealed through Christ. They focus their work on vulnerable and marginalised people in society – for example, providing projects for young children and families, working with drug addicts, as chaplains in prisons and hospitals, visiting the elderly, and providing access to worship outside of church.

**Evangelical:** spreading the word by way of preaching the Gospel of Christ.

**Mission:** 'a sending' – being sent to do something.

### SIM – Serving in Mission

SIM has a worldwide scope to follow Jesus' instruction to send people out on **mission**. Members work chiefly in areas where it appears Christianity is under attack – for example, in Nigeria where Christians are often the target for terrorist groups. Churches have been destroyed, vicars killed and people left traumatised by what they have suffered. SIM supports the rebuilding of these communities.

#### Revision tip

Mission has become popular because there is a discussion as to whether religion can still be as relevant to people in a modern world as it was centuries ago. It is possible for evaluation questions to look at this issue with a statement to discuss, such as 'Religion is not relevant in the modern world'. Knowing examples of how people are making it relevant could help with such a question.

### The Ichthus Fellowship

This is a group of new 'churches' linked to already established churches which are 'planted' so that the church continues to grow. They offer more **evangelical** than traditional worship, to appeal to a modern audience who are not enthused by traditional forms of worship.

### Fresh Expressions

This organisation offers 'different churches', set up in pubs, cafés, schools and even skate parks or beaches. These gatherings take religion directly to people who would never think about going to church. They are all planted to suit the needs of that group and help them become and develop as Christians.

#### Activity

##### Fix it!

Read the answers below, each of which is worth 2 marks, and improve each to 5 marks.

*Explain two ways in which mission is important to Christians today.*

(5 marks)

*Mission is important to Christians today because in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told his disciples to go and make everyone a Christian follower. It is also important because it means that people in non-Christian countries get to hear the Christian message.*

*Explain two ways in which mission is important in showing faith in action for Christians today.*

(5 marks)

*Mission shows faith in action because a Christian knows Jesus told them to 'Go make disciples of all nations' (Matthew). They could just read the Bible and think about it, but this is an instruction, so they have to actually get out and do something active. In other words, they aren't just believing in their heads, but showing their belief by their actions (faith into action).*

# Persecution and reconciliation

REVISED

**Persecution** is hostility and ill-treatment, usually because of prejudice. It can be brief or long-term; it can be by one person or many; it can be by a government, or against the law in a country; it can be recently begun or historic in nature and spanning many years; it can be mild or life-threatening.

The Church has faced persecution as far back as Jesus himself. The Roman and Jewish authorities persecuted him and his disciples. Many early Christians suffered death as a result of spreading the Christian message. For nearly 300 years after Jesus' death it was illegal to be a Christian, carrying a likely death sentence as punishment.

Christian reaction to this has been to trust God in times of need ('all things will pass', 'God knows best', 'blessed are the persecuted'), react with forgiveness and love rather than hate, and for those not suffering persecution to support the persecuted (irrespective of faith or no faith). This is still the case in the world today.

There have been individuals and organisations involved in support for the persecuted, from Brother Andrew who smuggled Bibles into communist countries, to James and Stephen Smith who set up the Aegis Trust, which encourages people to challenge all types of discrimination (now working extensively in Rwanda following genocide there), and the work of Open Doors, an organisation which fights for justice and freedom, raises awareness of persecution issues, trains people to work with those affected by persecution and offers practical help to rebuild communities.

**Reconciliation** means bringing people together to be friendly again. When Jesus made reconciliation with God possible through his death, it was the ultimate sacrifice. Christians should be able to reconcile with each other after dispute, whether as families, communities or nations.

Corrymeela in Ireland and the international Community of the Cross of Nails are two communities working for reconciliation. There are also individuals with similar aims, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa who has spent his whole life trying to reconcile the black and white communities there after years of discrimination. He has also worked with the Israeli and Palestinian communities.

The Quakers do not believe in the use of violence. Many Quakers have worked as mediators to bring reconciliation to opposing sides in the pursuit of peace.

**Persecution:** hostility and ill-treatment, usually because of prejudice.

**Reconciliation:** coming back together after a falling out, so that no grudge is held.

## Revision tip

Reconciliation is a key Christian concept so make sure you: **(1)** know a clear definition; **(2)** can give examples of why it is necessary and examples of how it works; **(3)** know similar and different ways that Christian groups work to reconcile people; **(4)** can explain two ways in which reconciliation is important to Christians and two teachings to support this, and **(5)** can evaluate the need for reconciliation and the outcomes if the world was reconciled (and indeed if this is even possible).

## Now test yourself

TESTED

- 1 What are mission and evangelism?
- 2 Why do Christians evangelise?
- 3 What is persecution?
- 4 How have Christians fought persecution?

# Poverty

## 1.2 Christianity: Practices

### Why the need for help and the Christian response

**LEDs** are the poorest countries in the world and the people suffer generally through no fault of their own. Often one or more of these contexts applies: they are at war, debt ridden, suffer natural disasters, have corrupt governments, have few natural resources, employment/pay is low, and they are exploited by rich countries. They are not in an economic position to raise the standard of living for all their people.

Christians have links to many countries and they are moved with compassion at media coverage of disasters and crises that some people face. Many see helping as putting their beliefs (faith) into action. In the poorest countries even the smallest response can make a massive difference. Jesus worked among the poor and so Christians are copying his example and re-enacting his work.

The Parable of the Sheep and Goats clearly states that whoever a believer helps, it is as if they are helping Jesus himself and that they will gain the reward of heaven.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan clearly shows the need to help where help is needed, regardless of who the victim is – this encourages Christians to help in all situations.

The Specification names three religious agencies at work in LEDs – **Christian Aid**, **CAFOD** and **Tearfund**. You must study at least one. All three provide **emergency**, **short-term** and **long-term aid**. They are all part of the UK's Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) and work with partner organisations when a disaster occurs.

All three work in the UK to campaign for the government to raise issues to secure justice for LEDs. They increase public awareness through the media and educational programmes which keep the issues in the minds of the public. They all fundraise so that the public keep giving money, ensuring these charities can continue to meet the needs of many people in **poverty**.

All encourage Fair Trade. This means that producers get a fair amount for the goods produced and in turn can pay their workers fairly. It helps raise the economic status of people throughout the system, but crucially the producers who are usually paid least.

#### CAFOD

The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development has more than 500 partners in LEDs. The organisation works in disaster areas providing relief and disaster risk reduction strategies. Long-term projects are carried out with local groups. It is essential that the communities themselves see the value of what is being done.

The idea is that projects can breed self-belief and self-reliance, which often then lead to much greater change, as communities gain confidence and see more ways to develop and improve what they have.

#### Christian Aid

This organisation was set up to deal with the refugee crises in Europe after the Second World War, but since then it has extended its work worldwide, providing a response to disasters and promoting long-term development. It works with partner agencies and will support all of them, regardless of race, religion, etc. It assesses projects in a country, then supplies experts and materials for the projects to be completed.

**CAFOD:** a charity (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development).

**Christian Aid:** a charity working in the UK and developing world providing emergency and long-term aid.

**Emergency aid:** immediate response to a disaster with urgent medical and survival provisions.

**LED:** less economically developed country.

**Long-term aid:** development of communities to become self-sufficient, through projects which usually last for at least a year.

**Poverty:** the absence or paucity of the basic needs of life – food, water, shelter, healthcare, education and employment.

**Short-term aid:** start of the rebuilding process after emergency response, or development projects which usually last a few weeks or months.

**Tearfund:** a Christian charity working to relieve poverty in developing countries.

#### Revision tip

Notice the similarities here in reasons to help and the way that help is achieved. As there are plenty of religious teachings that cover the requirement to help, this lends itself to a 5-mark question. It is also good to have in mind a couple of real examples of what has been done in aid projects.

# MY REVISION NOTES

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