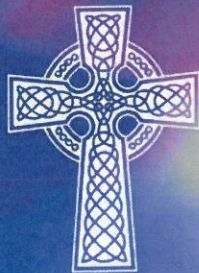


PHILOSOPHY RELIGION & ETHICS



Resources for Christianity
Bridging Work



'Achievement for All'

God and the idea of the Trinity



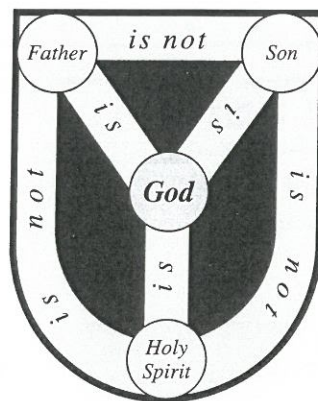
THE BARE BONES

- Christians are monotheists; they believe that there is only one God.
- Christians believe that, although there is only one God, He can be understood in three different ways: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three together are called the Trinity.

A What is the Trinity?

When Christians talk about the **Trinity** they are referring to the way in which God is described and how people understand what God is.

Christians believe in one god who has three 'persons' or 'natures'.



Although these are different, they are all part of the same God.

Many people have found the Trinity a very difficult idea to understand. The important point to remember is that although God is described as three persons, there is still only one God, not three different ones.

KEY FACT

Remember

The Trinity is the idea that there are three persons who are all God, not three Gods.

Q Who are the three 'persons' of the Trinity?

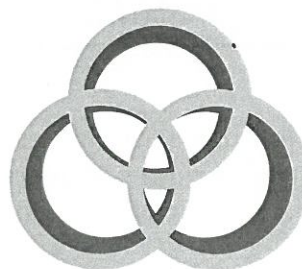
B Why do Christians believe in the idea of the Trinity?

Christians say that the idea of the Trinity is found in the Bible where God is described in three different ways.

All the Creeds of the Christian Church, such as the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, talk about the Trinity.

The Trinity is a way of expressing the different personalities of God which are found in the Bible and in Christian teaching.

KEY FACT



C What are the three persons of the Trinity?

Remember

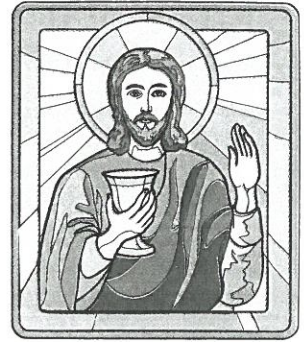
Jesus was a human being, but he was also God.

Q Can you think of another way to show the Trinity as a diagram or picture?

God the Father is believed to be the creator of the universe. God is also called Father as a way of showing human dependence on God, denoting a close and loving relationship.

God the Son refers to Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus was not just an ordinary man, but was **God in human form**. Christians believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus made it possible for them to have salvation.

God the Holy Spirit refers to the way in which God lives in the hearts and lives of believers. Christians believe that God sent his Holy Spirit to comfort and guide people, so that when they pray, God answers them and gives them the courage to do the right thing.



D Alternative ideas about God

- Traditionally, people have referred to God as being a man and so we have the idea in Christianity of God the Father.

In recent years, many women have objected to this saying that as everyone is made in God's image, God should be thought of as female as well as male.

- Therefore, some people now use the expression God the Mother in their prayers. They feel that this shows that God has a more feminine side.



KEY FACT

Remember

People today sometimes talk about God being a mother as well as a father and so you should not assume that God is supposed to be a man.

PRACTICE



- 1 What do Christians mean when they talk about the Trinity?
- 2 Where might you look to find teachings about the Trinity?

Remember that the three persons of the Trinity are all God.





THE BARE BONES

- The Bible is the most important and holy book in Christianity.
- Christians believe that the Bible is the 'Word of God', and a way in which God communicates to humanity.
- Christians try to understand the messages of the Bible, and to put them into practice in their daily lives.

A What is the Bible?

KEY FACT

The Christian scriptures, which are usually called the Old Testament and the New Testament, are called the Bible.

The **Old Testament** contains 39 books which together make up the whole of the Jewish Bible – the Tenakh. Jews refer to the first five books of their scriptures – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – as the Torah (law).

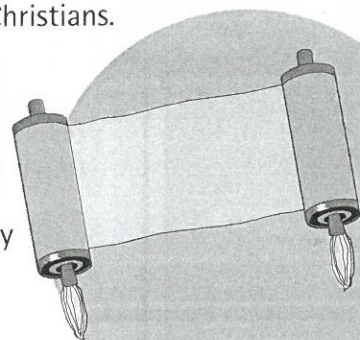
They believe that these books were given to Moses by God.

The **New Testament** is the writings of some of the first Christians.

KEY FACT

The New Testament contains Christian teachings about the life and death of Jesus, and what it means to be a Christian.

The 27 individual books of the New Testament were probably written in the first hundred years after the death of Jesus, but were not brought together until 367 CE.



Q What is the Tenakh?

B What do Christians believe about the Bible?

Remember

Although Christians may have different ideas about whether the Bible is literally true, they all try to follow its teachings.

- 1** Some Christians believe that the Bible is literally true. This means that they think that everything in the Bible happened in exactly the way that it is described. They believe that if scientists or historians have different understandings of the world, it is the Bible which is right and the people who are wrong, because they think that people make mistakes but God never does.
 - These Christians are often called '**fundamentalists**' or '**creationists**'. They might have difficulties when passages in the Bible seem to be contradicted by modern evidence.
- 2** Other Christians believe that parts of the Bible are not literally true, but are true in other ways, perhaps as stories that teach us crucial things about life. They believe that, sometimes, the Bible displays an understanding of the world that is outdated now.

KEY FACT

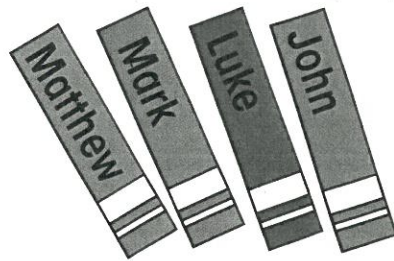
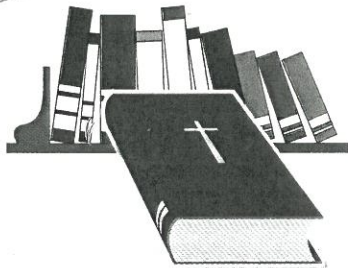
For Christians, the Bible is the Word of God. It is a '**revealed**' text which means that it was revealed by God to humans.

C The Old and the New Testament

Remember

Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Some people believe every word of the Bible is the literal truth while others believe that it has to be interpreted because it can sometimes be out-of-date.

- **Jesus was a Jew**, as were his followers. For this reason, the Old Testament is very important.
- It contains **history, law, poetry and prophecy**.
- One of its major themes is the relationship between God and humanity. The prophets wrote about the coming of a **Messiah**, who would bring peace to the earth.
- Isaiah wrote about a **Servant of God** who would suffer for the people's sins. Christians believe that this servant was **Jesus**.
- The first four books are the **Gospels** of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Gospels means 'good news'. The gospels are about the main events in **the life of Jesus**.
- The next book is the **Acts of the Apostles**.
- There are 21 books which are called the **Epistles**, or **letters**.
- The final book of the New Testament is the Apocalypse or **Book of Revelation** and is a book of **prophecy** about what will happen during the last days of the world.



Many Christians read some of the Bible every day and they use it as a guide when making important decisions.

Q How do Christians use the Bible in their daily lives?

KEY FACT

PRACTICE



- 1 Explain what is meant by the Old and New Testaments.
- 2 What do Christians believe about the Bible?

Remember the Bible is in two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament and it is the New Testament which is about Jesus and his teachings.





THE BARE BONES

- The life of Jesus is an essential part of the Christian faith and there are a number of key events which are very important.
- Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

A Who was Jesus?

KEY FACT

Remember

Jesus' mother was Mary but his father was God.

Q Who was Jesus' father?

Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God. They believe that Jesus was God incarnate, which means God in human form.

They also believe that God came to the Earth as a man to live amongst other people, to teach them and to share in their sufferings.

- Jesus was born sometime between 8 and 6 BCE, in the town of Bethlehem in Judaea, Palestine.
- Jesus' mother was a young woman called Mary. His father was a carpenter called Joseph but although Joseph was responsible for bringing up the young boy, the Bible teaches that his real father was God.
- We know very little about Jesus until he was aged about thirty. He visited his cousin, John the Baptist, and was baptized by him. It was then that his work started and his followers began to believe that Jesus was the Son of God.



B What did Jesus do?

Remember

Almost everything we know about Jesus took place in the three years before he died.

- After his Baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days to prepare himself for his ministry. Here he was tempted by the devil who offered riches and power if Jesus would follow him rather than God.
- Jesus gathered around him a group of men who are known as the Twelve Disciples. They were all working men from Galilee.

Simon Peter, Andrew, John, Philip, James the son of Zebedee, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas Iscariot.

Jesus preached in the open and attracted enormous crowds wherever he went. He performed many miracles during his ministry in Galilee, in particular healing the sick and the lame and making the blind see.

- Most of his teaching was in parables. These were stories which his listeners could easily understand, but which had a very important message. A good example is the famous story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 29-37).



C The Crucifixion of Jesus

- Jesus angered the Jewish authorities with his teaching and the Jewish priests were alarmed by the claim that Jesus was the **Messiah**. They expected the Messiah to be a king leading an army to free them from the rule of the Romans and Jesus was nothing at all like this.
- At the time of the feast of the **Passover**, Jesus celebrated a special meal with his disciples, the **Last Supper**. He was betrayed to the soldiers of the High Priest by **Judas Iscariot**. The High Priest and the elders (the **Sanhedrin**) tried Jesus and he was then taken before **Pontius Pilate**, the Roman Governor.
- Pilate tried to save Jesus from the Jews but they were so insistent on his guilt that Pilate was finally forced to sentence him to death. **Jesus was crucified on Good Friday**.
- A rich follower of Jesus, **Joseph of Arimathea**, had Jesus' body taken away and placed in a private tomb. The Sabbath began that evening, so it was not until Sunday morning that anyone could visit the tomb.
- When three women arrived at the tomb on Sunday they found that the stone covering the entrance had been rolled away. At first they thought someone had stolen the body but, shortly afterwards, they met Jesus. **He had risen from the dead**.
- Jesus met with his disciples and other followers, and ate and talked with them for another **40 days**. Then he was **taken up into heaven** and they did not see him on earth again.
- When Jesus' disciples gathered together to celebrate the festival of **Pentecost** they received the **Holy Spirit**. This appeared as tongues of flame over them and they found that they could speak in different languages so that they could spread the teachings of Jesus.

Jesus was a man, but he was also God.



Remember Jesus was a Jew, not a Christian.



KEY FACT

Q Why were the Jewish authorities frightened of Jesus?

PRACTICE



- 1 What was special about the birth of Jesus?
- 2 What important teaching is found in the Parable of the Good Samaritan?

The Ten Commandments



THE BARE BONES

- The Ten Commandments are ten rules which Jews and Christians believe were made by God.
- They were given to Moses to pass on to everyone else.

A What are the Ten Commandments?

The Ten Commandments are found in several places in the Old Testament, including Exodus 20.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall have no other gods.

You shall not misuse the name of God.

You shall not covet (be envious of) your neighbour's possessions.

Honour your father and mother

You shall not worship idols.

You shall not murder.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

You shall not steal.

Remember

Jesus said he did not want to change the Ten Commandments in any way.

B What do they mean?

- Four of the commandments are about how people should behave towards God:

You shall have no other gods.

You shall not worship idols.

You shall not misuse the name of God.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.



- The other six are about how people should treat each other:

Honour your father and mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

You shall not covet (be envious of) your neighbour's possessions.

- For both Jews and Christians, all of the commandments are equally important.

Q Which of the commandments do you feel is the most important and why?

C Why are the Ten Commandments important?

The Ten Commandments are part of the 'covenant', or agreement, made between God and humanity.

- The Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses as a set of rules for life. They apply to everyone, all of the time.
- If people obeyed these rules, God would be pleased with them and take care of them.
- If people disobeyed the rules then God would punish them. There are several examples in the Old Testament of people being punished for breaking some of the commandments.



Many of our laws today are still based on the Ten Commandments.

- In synagogues and also in many churches the Ten Commandments are written on the walls so that people are always reminded that these were the Laws which God gave to humanity and which all people must keep in order to obey God.



Jews and Christians believe that these rules apply to everyone all the time, and give an outline of the right way to live.

- 1 Why do you think God gave his people the Ten Commandments?
- 2 Explain why the fourth commandment is important.

Jesus said that the two greatest commandments were 'to love God and to love your neighbour as yourself'. Although these are not part of the original Ten Commandments, they do, in fact, summarise them.



KEY FACT

Remember

The Ten Commandments are just as important for Christians today as they were for the Israelites in the desert.

KEY FACT

Q Who did God give the Ten Commandments to?

KEY FACT

PRACTICE



The Sermon on the Mount



THE BARE BONES

- Jesus delivered a sermon usually called the Sermon on the Mount when he was near to the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 5-7).
- During this sermon he taught people the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer.

A What are the Beatitudes?

The Beatitudes:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12)

Jesus explained that although people often had to suffer in their lives on earth, God loved them and they would be rewarded and comforted when they died and went to heaven.

KEY FACT

Remember

The Beatitudes are just the first part of the Sermon on the Mount.

B What is the Lord's Prayer?

Jesus said people often made a great fuss about praying, and prayed in public so other people would see them and see how holy they were. He said that this was wrong and told people that they should pray using 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 today our daily bread.

Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'
(Matthew 6:9-13)

Remember

Jesus said the Lord's Prayer was the one prayer which people needed.

Q Where did Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount?

C What other teachings are in the Sermon on the Mount?

- 1** Jesus taught people not to judge others.

'Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.' (Matthew 7:1-2)

- 2** He taught that adultery and divorce were wrong.

'It has been said, "Anyone who divorces his wife must give a certificate of divorce". But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery'. (Matthew 5:43-45)

- 3** He also taught that people should forgive others.

'You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy". But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:43-45)

The Sermon on the Mount contains almost all of the important teachings which Jesus gave to his followers.

Q What do you think was the most important teaching in the Sermon on the Mount?

KEY FACT

PRACTICE



- 1** Why did Jesus say people should use the Lord's Prayer?
2 What did Jesus teach about divorce?

When you answer a question on the Sermon on the Mount, remember there are many other things in the sermon apart from the Beatitudes.



The problem of evil



THE BARE BONES

- The problem of evil asks how people can believe in a loving, all-powerful God when there is evil and suffering in the world.
- Did God create evil? Does God make us suffer on purpose? Or, is there nothing God can do to prevent it?

A Moral evil and natural evil

KEY FACT

Philosophers often draw a distinction between moral evil and natural evil.

- Moral evil is the name given to evil which is deliberately caused by humans, such as cruelty or dishonesty.
- Natural evil is the name given to bad things which happen but which are not anyone's deliberate fault, such as earthquakes and floods and diseases.

Many people think that the existence of evil and suffering in the world shows that there is no God, or, if there is a God, he isn't very kind. Christians have to try and find a way of answering them.

Where was God during the Holocaust, or the war in Bosnia, or when the World Trade Centre was hit?

Why do animals or babies suffer, when they can't be expected to learn anything from it?

If God can do miracles, why doesn't he do them all the time, whenever people are suffering?

'The problem of evil'

Does God need to test people, before he knows how strong their faith is? Shouldn't God know that already?

If God knows that some people are going to suffer a lot, or be very evil people, why does he make them in the first place?

Why do some people suffer so much more than others?

Q Explain the difference between 'natural' and 'moral' evil

B Why does God allow suffering?

Remember

Many Christians say that evil can't be understood – we just have to trust God knows what he's doing.

- Sometimes Christians say the world was made perfect, but that people disobeyed God. This disobedience is known as the **Fall**. They sometimes argue the Fall was such a catastrophe that it spoilt the balance of nature as well as the relationship between people and God – so people are responsible for natural disasters as well as for the wrong choices they make. This way of thinking follows the Christian teacher **Augustine**.

B

- Another Christian approach to the problem of evil is to say that God deliberately gave people **free will**. If people were going to have a real freedom to choose, then there had to be the possibility of doing wrong, otherwise the choice would only be pretend.
- Sometimes people say that if there was no evil and suffering in the world, then we would not **develop** as human beings. We couldn't be brave unless there was danger. We couldn't be generous if there were no people who needed things. We would never learn important lessons such as how to be patient, if we always got what we wanted. This way of thinking follows the Christian teacher **Irenaeus**.
- Some people say that suffering is a **kind of test** from God, to see how people will respond and if they will stay faithful. But others disagree with this idea, saying that God already knows everything and doesn't need to test us in this way.
- Some Christians believe that evil in the world is the fault of **the Devil**. They believe that the Devil encourages people to do wrong, and that the Devil causes disease and natural disasters. Other Christians believe that the Devil is a way of describing the opposite of God, but they do not think that the Devil literally exists as a personality, because this would suggest that God doesn't have the power to do anything to stop him.



Why do some Christians find it difficult to believe in the idea of a personal Devil?

C *Suffering in the Bible: the Book of Job*

The Bible presents different approaches to evil and suffering. One of the most famous is the story of Job. Job was a good man who was faithful to God, but God allowed Satan (the Devil) to test Job by making him suffer. Job lost all his wealth, his family and his home, but still he remained faithful to God. However, he wanted to know why God was allowing him to suffer, and he demanded to meet God and to ask him. God told him that as creator of the world, he was so much more powerful than Job, and Job should recognise that he had no right to challenge God. Job understood that he should just accept his suffering, and everything was restored to him.

Many stories in the Bible show that God does not like to see people suffer.

- Christians believe God answers prayers when people ask for help. Jesus healed people who were sick, and brought dead people back to life.

What is the main message of the story of Job?

FACT**PRACTICE**

- 1 Explain how Christians have tried to answer the problem of why a loving God allows evil in the world.
- 2 Explain Biblical teaching about evil and suffering.
- 3 'All the evil in the world must come from the Devil.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer, and show you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.





THE BARE BONES

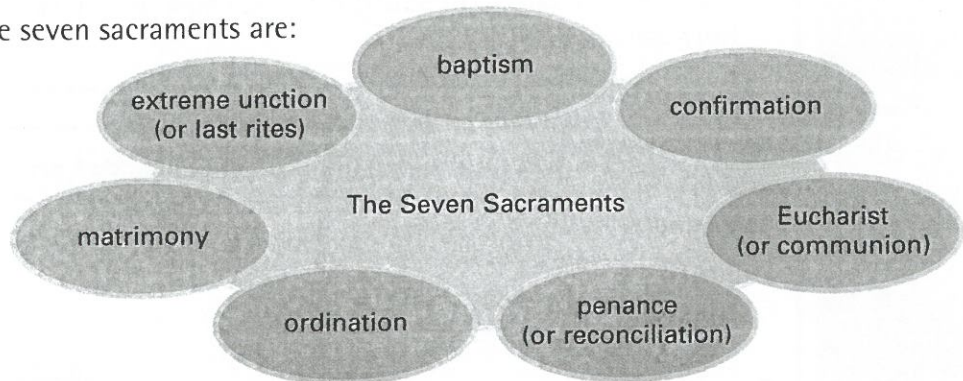
- Baptism is the first of the seven sacraments (or religious rites) practised by many Christians.
- When a person is baptised, he or she is either sprinkled with, or totally immersed in, water as a sign of purification.

A What is a sacrament?

KEY FACT

A sacrament is a religious ceremony or act regarded as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace.

- The seven sacraments are:



- Before the Reformation, the seven sacraments were observed by all Christians. Today, Protestant churches tend to practise only baptism, the Eucharist and matrimony. However, Orthodox and Catholic churches still perform all seven sacraments.

Q What is a sacrament?

KEY FACT

Most Christians believe that baptism is a sacrament, meaning an oath or sacred promise to God.

B Why do people need to be baptised?

KEY FACT

Christians believe that because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden all people are born with Original Sin and this needs to be removed before they can begin their lives as Christians.

Here is a part of the service recited during a Baptism ceremony.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that to enter the kingdom of heaven we must be born again of water and the Spirit, and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth. Here we are washed by the Holy Spirit and made clean. Here we are clothed with Christ, dying to sin that we may live his risen life. As children of God, we have a new dignity and God calls us to fullness of life. (*Common Worship*)

Q Explain what is meant by Original Sin.

C What happens at the baptism of a baby?

In most churches, cleansing of sin takes place when a young baby is baptised.

- 1 The baby is taken to church by its parents.
- 2 The priest and the family go to the **font** which is usually by the main door of the church.
- 3 As the baby cannot speak for itself, **godparents** make a promise that they will bring up the child as a Christian.
- 4 Next, the priest or minister blesses the baby and pours water over its head in the form of a cross, **blessing** it in the name of 'The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

D What happens at the baptism of an adult?

- 1 Some Christians believe baptism should only take place when a person is able to make the decision for themselves. This is particularly true in the Baptist Church.
- 2 In the Baptist church, there is a ceremony of **adult** baptism. In the front of the church is a large tank or **pool**, covered by flooring. The pool is opened and the minister and the person to be baptised stand in it. The person is then baptised by **total immersion**. The minister holds them and they lean back right under the water.

This is the sort of baptism Jesus is supposed to have received from John the Baptist.



- 1 Why do babies need to be cleansed from sin?
- 2 What is different about baptism in a Baptist church?

The most important part of a baptism occurs when water is placed on the person's head and the priest says they are baptised in the name of 'The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.



KEY FACT

Remember

Most Christians are baptised as babies and godparents make promises for them.

What is total immersion?

KEY FACT

PRACTICE





THE BARE BONES

- The Eucharist is an important sacrament for many Christians.
- Christians have many different names for the Eucharist. These include: the Lord's Supper, Mass, Holy Communion and the Breaking of Bread.

A What is the Eucharist?

- The word 'Eucharist' comes from the Greek meaning 'thanksgiving'. It remembers Jesus' last meal with his disciples before he was crucified.

For many Christians, sharing in the Eucharist is the most important part of their worship together because it means they are united as they share the body and blood of Christ.

- In some churches the Eucharist is shared every day, but in others it happens once a week, once a month, or even more rarely.

KEY FACT

B How is the Eucharist celebrated?

The celebration of the Eucharist usually follows a pattern:

- The bread and wine are placed on the altar and the priest or vicar reminds the congregation of what happened at the Last Supper.
- The Eucharistic Prayer is said, giving thanks to God.
- The bread and wine are blessed by the priest and the words of Jesus at the Last Supper are read.
- In some churches, the congregation exchange a sign of peace.
- The bread and wine are shared with the congregation.
- The congregation are blessed and 'sent out into the world'.



Remember

The Eucharist service recalls what happened during the Last Supper Jesus ate with his disciples.

Q What does 'Eucharist' mean?

C The Eucharistic Prayer

- Jesus words at the last supper.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Some Christians believe the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus when they are blessed. Others believe they symbolise Jesus' body and blood, but are bread and wine all the time.

- Here's one form of the Eucharistic Prayer:

Priest/Minister: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

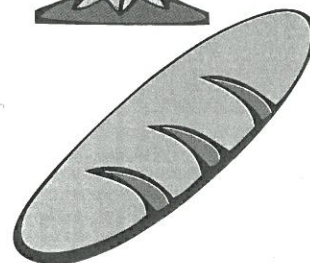
Priest/Minister: Lift up your hearts.

Congregation: We lift them to the Lord.

Priest/Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation: It is right to give thanks and praise.

Priest/Minister: It is indeed right,
it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places
to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King,
almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.



Q What do the bread and wine become?

PRACTICE



- 1 What did Jesus say at the Last Supper when he broke bread and drank wine with his followers?
- 2 Give three alternative names for the Eucharist.
- 3 Why is the Eucharist such an important part of Christian worship?



THE BARE BONES

- Christians believe that when they die they will have the chance of eternal life.
- Many Christians believe they may go to heaven, hell or purgatory, depending on how well they have lived on earth.

A Heaven

KEY FACT

Remember

Christian teaching does not say what heaven and hell are like but it does suggest hell is an existence where people cannot see God.

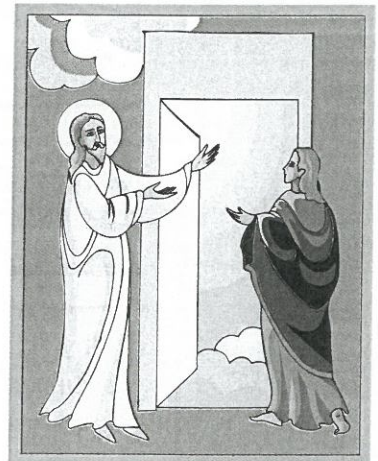
The central Christian belief is that the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross means all people who follow him will have the opportunity of eternal life with God when they die.

- This belief is found in the Nicene Creed where it states:

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

- It is not clear whether people will go straight to heaven after death, or whether they will wait until the Day of Judgement.

Heaven is viewed as a paradise where people will live with God.



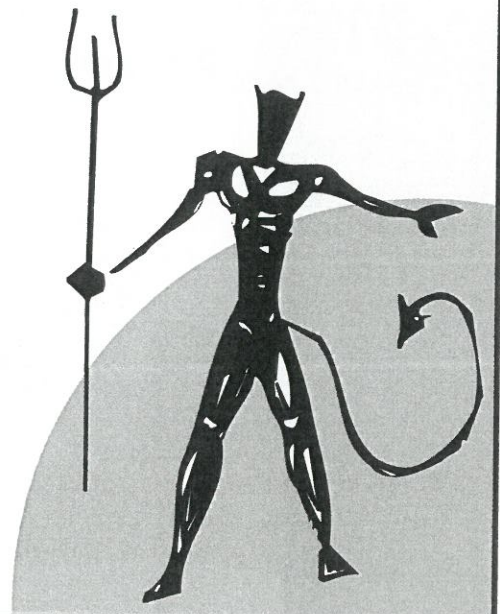
KEY FACT

B Hell

Remember

Christians believe that what happens to them when they die depends on how they have lived their lives on earth.

- People who have not lived a good life on earth will be sent to hell.
- Christian teaching and opinions about hell have changed over time.
- At one time, hell was believed to be a place of fire and brimstone, where people would be eternally punished by the devil.
- Today, many people think hell is simply a place where people are forever deprived from seeing God and being happy. In the same way, they see heaven as being eternally in the sight of God.



Q What is the Day of Judgement?

C Purgatory



- Roman Catholics believe there is a place between heaven and hell called purgatory. Most Catholics are probably not good enough to go straight to heaven because of the sins they have committed on earth, but they have believed in Jesus so they will not go to hell. Instead, they are taken to purgatory where they are punished for a period of time before they are able to enter heaven.

- In 1999, Pope John Paul II described purgatory like this:

'Before we enter into God's Kingdom, every trace of sin within us must be eliminated, every imperfection in our soul corrected. This is exactly what takes place in purgatory.'

- He said that purgatory wasn't a physical place, but a state of being.

D Resurrection

- The Bible is not clear about whether this new life after death is a physical or spiritual one. Some people believe they will be in heaven in their physical bodies, as they were on earth, while others believe it is just their souls which live on for eternity.
- The Apostles' Creed says:

I believe... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Q Explain how the Roman Catholic belief about the afterlife is different from that of other Christians?

Q What is reincarnation?

PRACTICE



- 1 What does the Bible say about life after death?
- 2 Why do you think some people believe in purgatory?



It is very important to remember that Christians do not believe in reincarnation. They believe that when you die you go to heaven, hell or, perhaps, purgatory. They do not believe that people's souls come back in another person.



THE BARE
BONES

- Ascension Day is the day Jesus was taken up into heaven.
- Pentecost is the day when the apostles received the Holy Spirit.

A What is Ascension day?

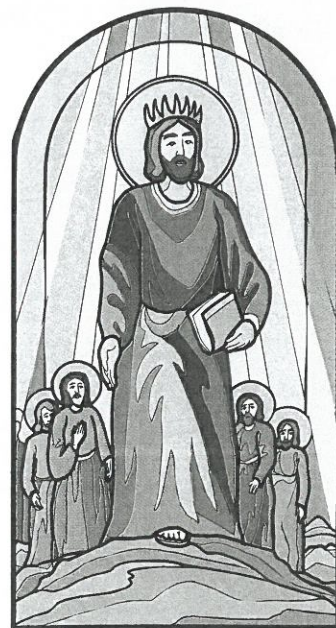
Ascension Day is celebrated on the Thursday which falls forty days after Easter Sunday.

It commemorates Jesus' ascension, when he was taken up into heaven.

- After Jesus had been raised from the dead, according to the Bible, he met with his disciples and other followers. He ate and talked with them, until he was taken up into heaven. Jesus did not return to earth again.
- On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command:

'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' So when they met together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. (Acts 1:4-9)

- In some churches, special services are held on Ascension Day. In the past, people used to have the day off work so that they could go to church, but today, Ascension Day is often treated as a normal working day rather than a holiday.



KEY FACT

Remember

Ascension Day was when Jesus finally left his disciples and went to heaven. This was forty days after Easter.

Q What did Jesus say would happen in a few days time?

B What is Pentecost?

Pentecost is a Jewish festival called Shavuot which takes place seven weeks after Passover.

In Christianity, Pentecost is important because it was at the celebration of this festival that Christians first received the Holy Spirit – according to the Acts of the Apostles – appearing as tongues of flame over them.

Pentecost is celebrated on a Sunday seven weeks after Easter.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1-4

- Pentecost is also known as 'Whitsun' or 'White Sunday' because of the white clothes that many people used to wear.
- Pentecost or Whitsun is known as the birthday of the church, because once the first Christians had the power of the Holy Spirit they were able to spread the message of Christianity.
- Pentecost is traditionally a day for baptisms. People often dress in white to represent purity. In some communities, it is a tradition to take part in walks as a demonstration of faith.



Ascension and Pentecost are two very important events because they mark the beginning of the Christian church.

KEY FACT

Remember

Pentecost marks the beginning of the Christian Church when the disciples received the Holy Spirit and were then able to heal people and speak in many different languages.

Q Why were the disciples gathered together for Pentecost?

KEY FACT

PRACTICE



- 1 What does Ascension Day celebrate?
- 2 On what day of the week is Ascension Day?
- 3 On what day of the week is Pentecost?
- 4 Why is Pentecost also known as Whitsun?
- 5 Why is Pentecost known as the birthday of the Church?
- 6 In which book of the Bible is the story of how the Holy Spirit was received at Pentecost found?

Remember, before his ascension Jesus promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to them and this happened at Pentecost.





THE BARE BONES

- Christians believe human life is sacred or holy.
- They believe all people are made in 'the image of God' as described in Genesis, which means, in a mysterious way, all people share something of the nature of God.
- Many Christians believe, because life is sacred, it should never deliberately be taken away.

A Christian belief

KEY FACT

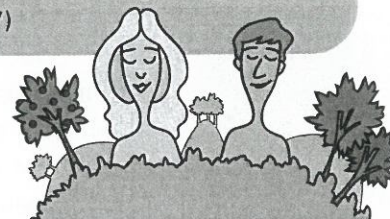
Q What does Genesis teach about the sanctity of human life?

Christians believe when God created people, he gave them something special, setting them apart from other animals.

'So God created man in his own image, In the image of God he created him; Male and female he created them.'
(Genesis 1:27)

'The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.'
(Genesis 2:7)

Human life is different, holy and sacred. 'The sanctity of life' means the same as 'the holiness of life'.



KEY FACT

B The sanctity of life in practice

KEY FACT

Because Christians believe life is sacred, it can affect their attitudes towards all sorts of moral issues.

- 1 Abortion:** if Christians believe life is sacred, even before it's born, they are likely to disagree with abortion and think it's the same as murder.
- 2 Euthanasia:** believing in the sanctity of life is likely to make Christians think that euthanasia can't be justified.
- 3 Suicide:** if Christians believe that lives are sacred, they are not likely to choose to end their own lives, although suicides often happen when people have gone beyond the point of being able to make a careful decision.
- 4 Capital punishment:** if Christians believe human life is sacred, then they might think it can never be right to kill someone, even if that person has committed very serious crimes.
- 5 Fighting in war:** some Christians believe, because human life is sacred, it can never be right to kill another person, even in war-time.

Q Can you explain your own views about these issues, with reasons?

C Different Christian views

Remember

All Christians believe life is sacred, but they have different ideas about what this means in practice.

- Some Christians believe that although life is sacred, it can still be ended in some circumstances. They believe the most important principle is love. They say it can sometimes be right to take away life, if it is the most loving thing to do, for example if someone is in a lot of pain and wants their own death to come more quickly, or if a pregnancy is likely to result in the birth of a severely disabled baby. They say decisions like these still respect the sanctity of life

When you are writing about any moral issues involving life and death, you can include ideas about the sanctity of life to show that you understand why Christians feel strongly about this.



D The image of God

- When the Bible says people are made 'in the image of God', it is not entirely clear what this means. Christians have often interpreted it to mean that humans share something of God's nature.
- Christians believe people have souls. They believe the soul is a part of a person which is separate from the body. When the body dies, the soul does not die with it, but continues to live after death. The soul is the part of the person that joins God in heaven and lasts for ever.
- Christians believe the soul sets people apart from other animals. It makes human life different from all other forms of life.
- Many Christians believe people have souls even before they are born, while they are growing during pregnancy.

PRACTICE



- 1 Explain what Christians mean when they say life is sacred.
- 2 How might belief in the sanctity of life affect a Christian's attitude towards abortion?
- 3 'If life is holy, we should be allowed to end it when people are in pain.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer, and show you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.



THE BARE BONES

- It is against the law in the UK to do anything deliberately to hasten someone else's death, even if they are in great pain and have asked to be helped to die.
- Most Christians disagree with euthanasia.

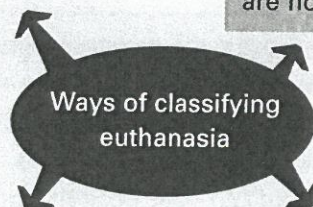
A Classifying euthanasia

The word 'euthanasia' comes from two Greek words, 'eu' which means 'good' and 'thanatos' which means 'death' – so 'euthanasia' means 'a good death'.

Most Christians believe it is wrong to choose the time of your own death, and that this is best left to God.

Active euthanasia is when deliberate steps are taken to end someone's life, for example by giving a lethal injection.

Passive euthanasia is when treatment which would have helped the person to live longer is stopped, for example if the patient has a heart attack, they are not resuscitated.



Involuntary euthanasia is when other people decide that the patient should die, for example if he or she is in a coma, or new-born, or unable to communicate.

Voluntary euthanasia is when someone asks to be given help to die, and makes it clear that this is his or her own choice.

Q What are the four different ways of classifying euthanasia?

B Church teaching on euthanasia

- The Roman Catholic Church teaches that life can only be ended by euthanasia if the dose of painkillers necessary to ease suffering is strong enough to kill the patient. The aim should be to stop the suffering, not to kill.
- Christians also accept it is not necessary to go to extraordinary lengths to keep someone alive if they have no hope of recovery.

Q What does the Roman Catholic Church teach about euthanasia?

Although you need to explain your own views, remember to leave enough time to describe Christian opinions and the reasons Christians hold them.



C Why some Christians are for euthanasia



- 1** Christians say that in some situations, helping someone to die to end their pain is the most loving thing to do. The Bible teaches 'Always treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.' If you would prefer euthanasia rather than end your life in pain, then you should allow it for other people.
- 2** They might argue God has given us the ability to think for ourselves, and we should be allowed to make our own decisions about the right time to die.
- 3** They might argue that if we keep patients alive with drugs when they are very ill, this is going against God's wishes by preventing the death God wants.

D Why some Christians are against euthanasia



- 1** Many Christians are against euthanasia, because they believe life is a gift from God. They believe only God has the right to take life away, and that God will choose the right time for someone to die.
- 2** Many Christians believe suffering can bring people closer to God. If they are in pain, they might turn to God more than they would if they were fit and healthy. Suffering might help someone to understand the suffering of Jesus.
- 3** Christians and other people sometimes argue, if euthanasia were legalised, that it would be open to abuse by some people. The elderly might be encouraged to die quickly by relatives wishing to avoid paying for their care, or to inherit money. People might try to disguise murder as euthanasia. This is sometimes called the 'slippery slope' argument, because once it starts, it is difficult to keep it under control.
- 4** Some Christians argue that hospices provide dying people with the chance to end their lives with dignity and without pain, so euthanasia should not be necessary.

Remember
The Bible doesn't say anything directly about euthanasia, because it was written before modern medicine made these things possible.

What do people mean when they talk about a 'slippery slope' argument?

PRACTICE



- 1** Explain why Christians might disagree about whether euthanasia can ever be right.
- 2** Describe how a Christian might respond to a close relative with a terminal illness who expressed a wish to end his or her life.
- 3** 'All life is worth having, even a life which is full of pain.' Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.