

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 122 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.

Overview

This chapter explores issues of human rights and social justice. You will look at moral issues and religious beliefs concerning practices to promote human rights, censorship, prejudice and discrimination and wealth and poverty.

Firstly, you will explore what is meant by human rights and consider the connections with social justice. You will then move on to examine the importance of human dignity for Christians, Jews and Muslims, and examine the ways they put their convictions into practice. You will consider questions posed by human rights such as conflicts between personal conviction or belief and the laws of a country, and when freedom of speech is a right or an offence.

You will then move on to consider the difference between prejudice and discrimination, and issues of discrimination today. You will consider how the beliefs and teachings in Christianity, Islam and Judaism impact on the work of religious campaigning groups.

Finally, you will consider the nature of wealth and poverty, and the differences between absolute and relative poverty. Through a consideration of ethical issues regarding the acquisition and use of wealth, the key teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism will be considered. For each religion there will be an examination of a charity that seeks to alleviate poverty in twenty-first-century Britain.

Throughout the course of this chapter you will consider the role these issues play in twenty-first-century Britain.

Task

Look at this picture. Create a spider diagram as to why people might need to campaign to have the freedom to marry.



Article 16: Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family

■ Human rights and social justice

Key Concept



Human rights The basic entitlements of all human beings, afforded to them simply because they are human.

Human rights are universal moral rights that apply to all people at all times in all situations, regardless of gender, race, religious or non-religious beliefs and age.



Human Rights Day, on 10 December each year, marks the day when the UN issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948 the United Nations issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This contained a set of articles, which are statements listing rights that all human beings should be granted. The declaration includes 30 articles, but all are based on the first article, '**All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights**'.

Many countries have formally agreed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are expected to maintain each of the rights in their country. When any of the articles are broken then other countries and international agencies step in to try to persuade the country to restore basic human rights.

Action groups such as Amnesty International continually monitor situations where human rights are not being upheld. Their work continues to be important. Although it was written in 1948, many people today still don't have the rights identified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Amnesty International

Set up in 1960 by Peter Benenson, Amnesty International works worldwide to protect and campaign for men, women and children whose basic human rights are denied.

Amnesty International uses a range of nonviolent methods to raise awareness and protest against human rights abuses:

- Forming protest marches
- Writing letters to governments, campaigning for justice
- Raising awareness, through the media, of people whose rights have been abused
- Running schools programmes and events to educate about human rights abuses

In 1977 Amnesty International were given a Nobel Peace Prize for the impact their work has had worldwide.



■ Article 4: No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms

► Social justice

Key Concept



Social justice Promoting a fair society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. Ensuring that everyone has equal access to provisions, equal opportunities and rights.

Today many agencies and individuals actively support people's entitlement to human rights in an attempt to create **social justice** – a fair and just relation between the individual and society.

'Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.'

United Nations

Social justice often involves governments and agencies working together to try and help developing countries. They might try to make less of a divide between rich and poor or make sure environments are clean and safe so that societies are not affected by pollution or risks to their health.

Task

- 1 Create a poster to illustrate what Ban Ki-Moon says about social justice.



'Circumstances such as where a person is born, where they live or their gender and ethnicity should never determine their income or their opportunities for quality education, basic healthcare, decent work, adequate shelter, access to drinking water, political participation or living free from threatened, or actual, physical violence.'

Ban Ki-Moon, Eighth Secretary General of the United Nations

► Individuals who campaign for human rights

Key Concept



Personal conviction Something a person strongly feels or believes in.

Throughout history individuals and religious people have campaigned for human rights and social justice by putting their own lives at risk. Their actions and commitment result from a belief in trying to create a world that is more socially just.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is an example of a human rights campaigner who wanted to create a more socially just society. Malala campaigned against the lack of education for girls in the Swat area of northwest Pakistan where she lived.

'I raise up my voice – not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard . . . we cannot succeed when half of us are held back.'

The Taliban were a powerful force in the Swat Valley, and had banned girls from attending school. For Malala, girls not being allowed an education went against Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to education.

Malala knew that her campaigning would put her life at risk, as the Taliban had issued death threats against her. When she was 11 she began a blog detailing her views on promoting education for girls and this led to her giving interviews for the media. On the afternoon of 9 October 2012, she was boarding her school bus when a gunman asked for her by name, then pointed a pistol at her and fired three shots. Malala survived the attack and, despite severe injuries, continues to campaign for issues of social justice.



■ Malala Yousafzai is a campaigner for education for girls

Task

Why are human rights important? In your answer you should explain three different reasons.



Many religious believers consider it important to campaign for issues of social justice as a response to the teachings of sacred texts. It is the teachings from the sacred texts that often inspire the actions of religious believers in the twenty-first century. As we will see, however, many of the texts can be interpreted differently which results in different beliefs and practices within the same religious tradition.

For Malala, her **personal conviction** or belief in the importance of education for girls drove her actions. For many people, their belief in the importance and dignity of each human being drives them to campaign against human rights abuses in order to create social justice.

▶ Attitudes to human rights and social justice

The **dignity** of human life is a common belief for all religious and non-religious traditions. This doesn't just mean that life is important but that each life, irrespective of age, gender or ability, is of worth and value and should be treated as such.

Task

Look at the index of this book (page 344). Which issues that you are studying would be influenced by a belief that all human life is of worth and should not be destroyed or maltreated?

Humanist attitudes to human rights and social justice

'As humanists, we support the right of every person to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be allowed to speak, and believe, as they wish.'

Humanists seek to live good lives without religion, using reason and respect for others when making moral decisions. The basic humanist principles underlying their support for human rights are:

- respect for all humans as worthy of equal consideration
- support for freedom of belief and expression
- tolerance for all beliefs and ways of life as long as they do not harm others.

Humanists oppose racism, sexism, torture, unfair imprisonment, persecution because of beliefs, and vast inequalities in wealth and education, all of which they believe stand in the way of social justice. As they do not believe in a God or divine force they consider it is up to each individual to create a just society. They believe that every human life has dignity and that this life is the only one that humans will have.

For centuries, humanists have considered it important to campaign for human rights and social justice. They were among the founders of the United Nations and other organisations concerned with human rights. The International Humanist and Ethical Union have been very active in supporting the **empowerment** of **oppressed** people.

Dignity being worthy of honour or respect.

Empowerment authority or power given to someone to do something.

Oppressed governed or treated with cruelty or injustice.

Christian attitudes to human rights and social justice



'How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion.'

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*

Dignity of human life

For many Christians, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects the main principles of Christianity. For Christians, all people are children of God and created in God's image. This means that the characteristics of God are reflected in all human beings, and for this reason they believe each individual has worth and value. So human life should not be destroyed or maltreated.

A teaching from the Bible that is often used by Christians to express their understanding of the relationship between God and human life comes in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. As shown in Chapter 5, p. 172 there are different beliefs among Christians regarding the validity of the creation story. However, all Christians would argue that parts of the story, whether taken as literal or not, reflect the importance of human life.

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

As an Anglican these verses teach me that all humans are created in the image of God and therefore have God-like qualities and characteristics.

As a Catholic this verse teaches me that all human life is created in God's image and so I do not agree with the death penalty or euthanasia.

Task

Explain how Christians might show dignity to other humans. In your answer consider the role of prisons chaplains from page 94.

Christian practices to promote human rights – agape in action

The belief that each person is sacred and worthy of respect is a core Christian belief, so it is expected that each person will be treated with unconditional love – **agape**. Agape is the foundation of all the principles of Christian social teaching and campaigns for social justice, and follows the example set by Jesus. It is a selfless, unconditional love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort, and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return. So following the example of Jesus, the work of many Christian charities and individuals expresses agape.

I volunteer to help at the Salvation Army Hostel three times each week. As each person walks through the door I remember they are made in the image of God and as such must be treated with dignity and respect. My love is unconditional however I am treated.
Helen

Agape selfless, unconditional love, the highest of the four types of love in the Bible.



Because Christians believe that each human life has dignity they believe in equality and taking a stand against unfairness and injustice. There is a long tradition of Christian individuals working to promote equality, human rights and social justice – often at a risk to their own lives.

Liberation theology

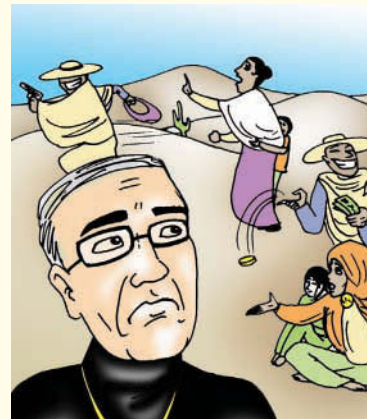
Within Christianity there is the concept of liberation theology, which is based on the teachings and actions of Jesus. During Jesus' life his actions helped to liberate people from unjust economic, political or social conditions. Jesus is often depicted as a freedom fighter. Liberation theology is the Christian idea that God has the power to change situations in the world that are unjust.

Some Christians have taken this belief to mean that it is right to stand up against governments that oppress their people or to challenge abuses of power.

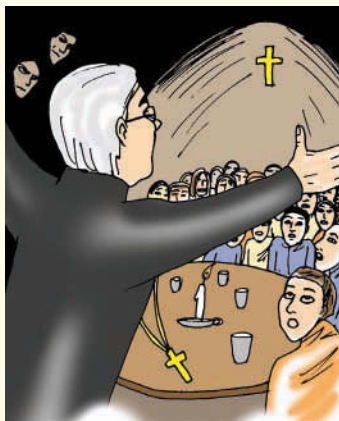
As part of their commitment to liberation theology, Christians may take part in peaceful protests or actively take part in supporting those harmed by injustice, for example people who are imprisoned for political reasons and without a trial. Some supporters of liberation theology have been killed for speaking out against injustice. Among them was Oscar Romero.



- 1 Oscar Romero was born in El Salvador in 1917. After training to be a carpenter he decided to become a priest and was ordained in 1942. He became Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977.



- 2 In the 1960s there was much crime and corruption in El Salvador. Some people were very wealthy, but many people were very poor. To begin with, Romero decided not to speak out against all the corruption that he saw.



- 3 His views changed after a close friend of his was murdered. He knew that he had to speak out against the injustices, and openly criticised the government. He held meetings, which had been banned by the government.



- 4 Protestors in the Church became targets of violence. Government slogans included 'Be a patriot – kill a priest'. After many threats, on 24 March 1980, soldiers burst into the chapel and gunned down Romero while he was celebrating mass.

Task

It's exam time and John is trying to answer a question. The question he has to answer is: 'Religion is not about solving injustices in the world. To what extent do you agree?'

John has decided to include three areas in his answer but he can't work out which to select.

Which of the following do you think he should discuss in his answer?

- Having a religious faith means putting your beliefs into practice.
- Religion is about going to places of worship and celebrating festivals.

- Every individual has to act on what they believe is right.
- The sacred texts from each religion guide the way that you should behave.
- As all humans are created by God they should be treated equally.
- It doesn't matter if you are religious, you should look after yourself first.
- Politicians deal with social injustices not religions.

For each area you have chosen, suggest some details John could include.



Jewish attitudes to human rights and social justice



I believe that the use of 'us' means that all the ingredients of creation have been completed, and now they participate in the creation of humans, the crown of creation.

Because only humankind has been made in the image of God, I believe only humankind resembles God in having free will.

In Judaism, human dignity is linked to the belief that God created human beings. Jews believe that human beings are made up of flesh and blood (the material) as well as the soul (the spiritual). Earth provides the material while God provides the spiritual.

'God said, "Let us make man with our image and likeness. Let him dominate the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock animals, and all the earth – and every land animal that walks the earth.'"

God [thus] created man with His image. In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them.'

Genesis 1:26–27

For many Jews these two verses influence their views on human rights and issues of social justice. If humankind was made in the likeness of God then all people must be equal and must be treated with respect. Some believe therefore that when you insult another person then you insult the Creator. So the actions of humankind should reflect those of God. The Talmud teaches:

'Just as the Lord clothes the naked as He did with Adam, so you clothe the naked;

just as the Lord visits the sick as He did with Abraham, so you visit the sick;

just as the Lord comforts the bereaved as He did with Isaac, so you comfort the bereaved;

just as the Lord buries the dead as he did with Moses, so you bury the dead.'

Softah 14a

There are many ways in which Jews have campaigned for social justice.



Jewish practices to promote human rights – tzedakah in action

In *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility* the former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks states that social justice is central to Judaism. He explains why the concepts of simcha (gladness), tzedakah (the religious obligation to perform charity), chesed (deeds of kindness), and tikkun olam (healing the world) all allow for social justice.

Tzedakah is defined by one of two terms: charity or social justice. While the word itself translates to 'charity' it can be thought of as giving justice, or assistance. Most importantly, tzedakah is giving because you can, not because you have to. The act of giving tzedakah is a **mitzvah** and is considered by many to be one of the most important commandments.

It can incorporate giving:

- money to those in need either as random acts or as annual donations
- time and energy to support those in need and campaigning for issues of social justice and human rights.

An example of tzedakah in action can be seen in Mitzvah Day, a day which reflects the teachings of the Talmud:

'Tzedakah and acts of kindness to others are the equivalent to all of the mitzvot in the Torah.'

Jerusalem Talmud, Pe'ah 1:1

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish-led day of social action. On Mitzvah Day thousands of people worldwide take part in hands-on projects, to support charities and to build stronger communities.

'Our mission is to reduce hardship and poverty, to help our environment and to bring a little joy – hands on – no fundraising. It is a way for all of us to make our mark regardless of our affiliation, wealth, age, sex or nationality.'

Mitzvah Day UK

Mitzvah although usually translated as duty or commandment, it can also refer to a kind deed.



Jewish people helping refugees on Mitzvah Day

Ensure Muslim attitudes to human rights and social justice



A Muslim is not just expected but obliged to oppose injustice and oppression no matter who the victim happens to be. The Qur'an teaches the equality of all humans and the special duties that humans have in creating a just and fair society.

An important teaching in the Qur'an which reflects the uniqueness and dignity of humans is:

'Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely. And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.'

Qur'an 5:32

For me this means that you should treat others how you want to be treated.

This bond is what I consider is essential to the ummah – an invisible thread that joins us.

For Muslims, the worth and dignity of each human is a natural and absolute right. It is given by God and cannot be taken away by individuals or the state. Even criminals, although they may be punished, should not be mistreated.



Muslim practices to promote human rights – ummah in action

A bond between Muslims is expressed through the term **ummah**. It refers to the unity of Muslims all over the world.

When Malcolm X made his journey to Makkah he felt a sense of true brotherhood.

Ummah the worldwide community of Muslims.

Zakah one of the pillars of Islam – the compulsory payment of money or possessions to help the poor and needy. It is considered an act of worship (ibadah). Each year a Muslim will give about 2.5 per cent of savings to support the needs of others. Each mosque will have a collecting box and a committee to decide how the money should be spent. Through this system the whole ummah is made more equal.

Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practised by people of all colours and races here in this ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures.

As Muslims believe all people were created by God so therefore each human life should be respected and treated with dignity. Within the ummah all Muslims are equal – rich or poor. The ummah promotes the welfare of the whole Muslim community in supporting human rights and trying to create a just society.

- They support each other through the giving of **zakah** and Sadaqah.
- They encourage people to live a good life and oppose inequalities. This might include being a member of organisations such as the London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission.



■ Islamic Relief responds to worldwide challenges

Islamic Human Rights Commission

The stated mission of the Islamic Human Rights Commission is to 'work with different organisations from Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds, to campaign for justice for all peoples regardless of their racial, confessional or political background'. The group is based in London and was established in 1997. Its activities include raising awareness and protesting against human rights abuses worldwide.

Human rights – questions and conflicts

Although many individuals and organisations actively support human rights and social justice there are many questions and problems that are raised.

What happens if a person's belief in a human right conflicts with the law of the country?

You have already read about two examples of an individual's personal convictions conflicting with the law in the countries they were living in – Malala and Oscar Romero. This results in choices having to be made: either to obey the law or to act from their personal conscience and risk punishment.

Task



■ Malala Yousafzai (page 126)



■ Oscar Romero (page 129)



■ Martin Luther King (page 148)



■ Raheel Raza (page 144)



■ Rachel Finegold (page 145)



■ A protest against same-sex marriage



■ Pro-life campaigners



■ Supporters of euthanasia



■ Supporters of capital punishment

From the information in this chapter and your own research, complete a table like the one below:

Name of person/organisation	How did they campaign?	What convictions drove their work?

► Censorship

Key Concept



Censorship The practice of suppressing and limiting access to materials considered obscene, offensive or a threat to security. People may also be restricted in their speech by censorship laws.

I believe in the freedom of speech. We should be allowed to say what we want and express our religious and non-religious views in public.

We should be able to talk about our beliefs in public but not if it's going to offend others or encourage hatred against people.

Article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights States:

'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'

However, this can raise many different views.

No views should be allowed to be stated in public that are going to offend or harm others. Religious beliefs should only be expressed in the home.

In the UK and Europe people are free to express their views about any religion unless the content is likely to incite violence or discrimination against its followers. However, there are many different views about whether people should be able to express views that cause offence or whether there should be censorship of these views. **Censorship** would mean preventing the publication or broadcast of certain content.



In class we were discussing the Charlie Hebdo case, when people working for a magazine were murdered just because of the drawings they published.

Jamal

Hold on now. Those weren't any old drawings. Those were drawings of the Prophet Muhammad which could be considered really offensive. They shouldn't have been allowed to publish any material that is going to offend people.

Sian



But it is all relative. What might offend you may not offend me. In Denmark when pictures of the Prophet were published some countries allowed them to be seen but some censored them. Do you want to live in a country where no one can speak their minds? In some countries all the media is censored so only the view of the government can be expressed. Up until 2008 there was a blasphemy law in England, which censored things in the media which were offensive in Christianity.

Tom

Anti-Semitic hostile towards or prejudiced against Jews.

Islamophobic hostile or prejudiced against Muslims.

I am not saying that but when I look at some websites and I see the **anti-Semitic** and Islamophobic statements I know they have only been written to offend . . . and that can't be right.

Sian



In the UK and Europe people are free to express their views about any religion unless the content is likely to incite violence or discrimination against its followers.

Jamal

But surely that's really hard to prove. Anyway some of the offensive comments come from religious people themselves. Those comments that come from the Westboro Baptist Church in the US about gay people and Jewish people really offend me.

Sian



But their views aren't reflecting the majority of Christians. They are just examples of extremist views and you get those in every religion. Extremism is when people state extreme political or religious views. If people weren't allowed to express offensive views then they would still hold them.

Jamal

I think for all of us it's a personal decision that often relates to the context. I am not sure we can ever get a balance between free speech and censorship.

Tom



I suppose it does depend on the individual. I get really fed up when people come to my door and talk to me about religion.

Sian

Now that leads us to a really difficult question. How far should there be freedom of religious expression?

Jamal



Task

Tom, Sian and Jamal all have different opinions. Explain which three arguments you think are the strongest and why you think this.

► Freedom of religious expression



Religion is expressed in many different ways. Often in the media we read of situations in which one person's desire to express their faith has led to others complaining or being offended.

One way religion can be expressed is in the clothes or symbols we wear. In some countries it is illegal to wear religious symbols to school. In France, for example, any 'overtly' religious symbol cannot be worn or displayed in school.

Task

From the picture above identify the ways that people are expressing their faith.

In America a 13-year-old girl was banned from wearing her rosary to school. Although the school allowed pupils to wear jewellery, they had banned all rosaries because some gangs were wearing them as a symbol of gang identity. It's not unusual for schools to ban students from wearing gang symbols. If students are unable to outwardly identify with rival groups when they are in school, it lessens the potential for school violence. A representative from the Catholic Archdiocese said it was wrong that Christians had to give up wearing a symbol expressing their commitment to Christ because some people misused it.

Often symbols will be worn that reflect a particular belief and are an important part of the believer's identity.

When I put my kippah on in the morning I feel that it shows my respect to God by covering that part of my body which is nearest to him. I feel it is part of my identity as a Jew.

When I was 11 I decided to wear the hijab. No one forced me. After reading the Qur'an it was my own personal conviction to dress modestly.

I am Christian and member of the Salvation Army. Our uniform reminds everyone of what we stand for and our commitment to God. I am proud to wear it because it shows the God I serve.

When I became an ordained priest I was allowed to select the vestments I wanted to wear. These are important to me when I lead worship and make me feel humble to be part of such a long tradition.

For some religious people, for example Christians and Muslims, it is important to tell other people about their faith. This could involve inviting friends to religious activities in the hope they will join the faith community.

It could also be as part of a **mission** where a person (missionary) is sent out from the faith tradition to **evangelise** to try to convert people to join their tradition. There are very many different views within religious traditions to mission and **conversion**. For some Christians it is a duty to tell others about the Gospel in the hope of converting them. This might be through pamphlets, door-to-door visits or preaching in public places. Their activities are driven by their interpretation of passages in the Bible such as:

'He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation".'

Mark 16:15

Other people think that trying to convert people from other faiths (or people of no faith) is disrespectful towards their beliefs.

Mission calling of a religious organisation, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.

Evangelise to try to convert someone to a different religion (usually Christianity)

Conversion changing one's religion or beliefs.

Task

'Religious beliefs should not be expressed in public.'

Discuss this statement, showing more than one point of view.

In your answer you should include reference to:

- censorship
- extremism
- human rights
- personal conviction
- social justice.

► Religious extremism

Key Concept



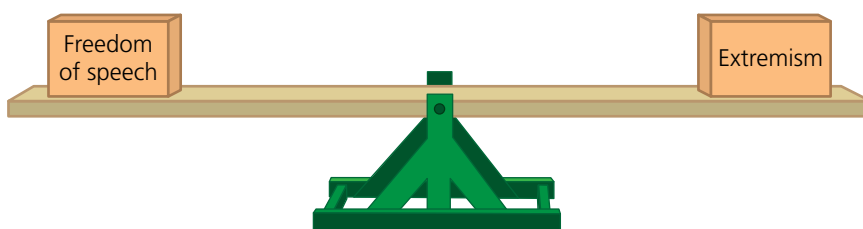
Extremism Believing in and supporting ideas that are very far from what most people consider correct or reasonable.

Anti-abortion extremism

Sanctity of life is an important belief in Christianity. For many this belief guides personal considerations and actions on issues such as medical ethics, family planning, euthanasia, capital punishment and abortion. However, some people hold very extreme views on the issue and believe that procedures like abortion are wrong and that they must act to stop them. This can lead to acts of violence.

In 2015 Robert Lewis Dear shot and killed three and injured nine more at the Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado. Planned Parenthood advises people on contraception and other issues of sexual health as well as abortion. He believed that the Bible condemns abortions and by attacking people who worked in abortion clinics he was doing 'God's work'.

There are many ways that people might show the importance of their beliefs. For some it is important to join organisations and activities where people can share similar views and beliefs. For others it is important to try and persuade people to have the same beliefs. There are many ethical questions concerning what activities people should engage in because of their beliefs. There is a fine balance between freedom of speech and action, and actions and speech that are considered extreme.



For some religious believers their beliefs and faith are so important to them that they may feel justified in acting in certain extreme ways to uphold the belief or to try and make others believe it too. These actions can cause harm to themselves or other people. Such actions might occur because the individuals:

- interpret the religious scripture in such a way that they believe this is the way to behave or react
- that through such actions they will be rewarded in this life or an after-life
- are influenced by friends and family who act in similar ways
- believe that they are doing the work of God.

There are many different types of religious **extremism**. The one factor they have in common is that the individuals involved are all acting because of a belief that they hold to be true. To understand some of the issues caused by religious extremism in the world today, see page 266 on the rise of jihadist groups.

▶ End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Censorship
- Extremism
- Human rights
- Personal conviction
- Social justice

Key teachings about:

- the dignity of human life
- promoting human rights

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by agape.
- 2 What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Write your answer in four bullet points.
- 3 In your own words explain what the term 'religious extremism' means.
- 4 Draw a table with two columns. Describe three different reasons for supporting censorship and three for disagreeing with censorship.

Agree	Disagree

The Big Question

'People should be allowed to express their religious beliefs in public.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Skills Link

- 1 Describe one example of when personal religious conviction has conflicted with the laws of a country.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **dignity of human life**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/ Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/ Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/ Because of this they Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Prejudice and discrimination

Key Concepts



Discrimination Acts of treating groups of people, or individuals differently, based on prejudice.



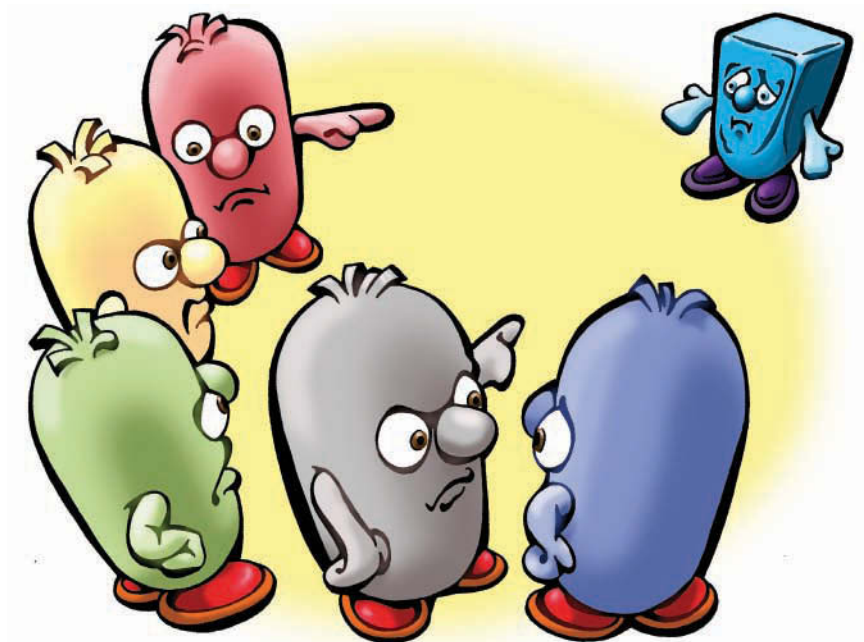
Prejudice Pre-judging; judging people to be inferior or superior without cause.

*'Prejudice is a great time saver.
You can form opinions without
having to get the facts.'*

E.B. White

The two key words in this area, '**prejudice**' and '**discrimination**' are linked, but their meaning is slightly different.

Prejudice means pre-judging something or someone based on a certain characteristic such as race, religion, gender or age, usually without any real evidence on which to base that judgement.



Prejudice means pre-judging someone on a certain characteristic. Discrimination is when you change the way you act towards a person based on your prejudice.

Prejudice is about what we think, but discrimination involves those pre-judgements being put into action. Individuals, organisations and governments can all be guilty of discrimination. Throughout history, governments have discriminated against certain groups of people, for example by preventing them from:

- ▶ being able to take certain jobs
- ▶ marrying who they want
- ▶ attending their places of worship
- ▶ living in certain areas
- ▶ voting
- ▶ driving a car.

In Britain there are many laws to protect people who in the past have been discriminated against. However, many people would say that discrimination still exists, for example:

- ▶ Some buildings do not allow access for all the people who want to use them.
- ▶ In certain firms there is an expectation that particular types of people won't become leaders. This is known as a 'glass ceiling' and is a term commonly used to explain the difficulties women can experience when trying to become leaders and managers.
- ▶ The interpretation of religious texts can result in actions that are considered discriminatory. One such example is the role of women in worship in Christianity. In some Christian denominations, such as Catholic and Greek Orthodox, although women can take many important roles, they are not allowed to become priests. For some, this is considered an act of discrimination but many reasons are given why women shouldn't become priests:

All of Jesus' apostles were males, he did not select any females.

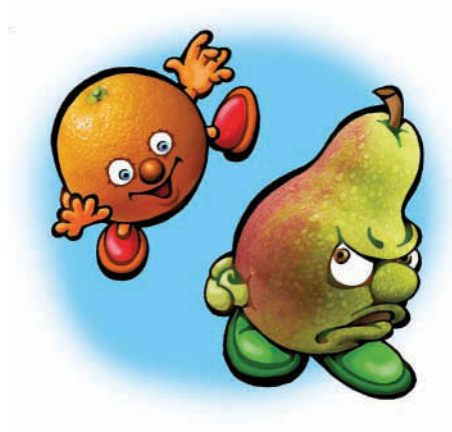
No one, not even the Pope has the authority to change the designs of a Church that Jesus selected.

It is not that women are inferior but they have different roles in the Church.

Task

John has been asked to design a poster to explain to a Year 5 student what is meant by prejudice. Which of the four ideas below would be the most effective?

Give reasons for your answer.



► Religious discrimination

Religious discrimination is the unequal treatment of an individual or group based on their beliefs. Like all discrimination, it is often based on prejudices, which have been formed by ignorance. Across the world, people are being discriminated against for their religious and non-religious beliefs. Actions can include:

- name-calling and ridicule
- attacks on places of worship
- burning of sacred texts
- not being allowed to wear symbols of religion in public
- acts of violence.

Islamophobia is a term often used to describe a distrust or dislike of Muslims. It can include stereotyped views, which are presented as if they are truthful about all Muslims. Many people believe that, as with all forms of prejudice and discrimination, greater education is the key to a greater understanding. Today in the United Kingdom activities are organised by Muslim individuals and communities to try to inform and educate about Muslim beliefs and practices and counter harmful stereotypes.

Speaking out – Isra Mohammed

After the Paris terrorist attacks in 2016, a 15-year-old Newcastle schoolgirl, Isra Mohammed, decided to speak out in a school assembly. Because Isra is Muslim some people had called her a terrorist but she told her classmates that terrorism has no religion and it does not represent Islam. Isra described how her seven-year-old sister had come home crying from school because she had been called a terrorist. She did not want to return to school. Isra told her classmates that they should not always believe what other people or the headlines in some newspapers said, and that Islamophobia can only be tackled by people learning more about each other's religions and beliefs. Isra's speech has now been downloaded many times from YouTube and she has been asked to speak to pupils in other schools.



■ Isra Mohammed spoke out against Islamophobia following the 2016 Paris attacks

Visit My Mosque day

Each year a mosque open day is organised by the Muslim Council of Britain. The aims of the day are to counter the negative attitudes to Islam and Muslims, which are often shown in the media. Over 80 mosques are open throughout the day and many activities take place. The open day gives opportunities to ask questions and to understand the role that the mosque plays in local communities, and national charity and welfare activities.



■ A poster for Visit My Mosque day

Task

Rank the activities below in the order you think would be most effective in countering negative attitudes to Islam.

- Reading the Qur'an
- Learning about Islam in school
- Listening to a talk about Islam
- Going to a mosque and being allowed to ask questions
- Hearing experiences from a classmate
- Watching a DVD about Islam

Christian attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Christians believe all human life was created by God and therefore each person is equal and sacred. The many laws which Moses received from God gave guidance for people to live in harmony with each other and support and protect those people who may be **marginalised**.

In Leviticus 19: 33–34 it is stated that strangers must be accepted. And in Deuteronomy it says:

'Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.'

Deuteronomy 24:17



■ Campaigners supporting racial equality

Jesus' example and teaching reflects the importance for Christians of treating all people as created by God. Jesus' ministry extended to many people who were marginalised and discriminated against. He healed women and lepers. He befriended Zacchaeus, a tax collector, even though tax collectors were shunned by other Jews.

In the later writings of the New Testament there are many references to the importance of recognising equality of all people. St Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians:

'For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise'

Galatians 3:27–29

This sums up the Christian teaching for me. As we are all one there should be no discrimination of race, gender, religion or status. I find it hard to believe that this letter was written so long ago – it is still relevant.

Marginalised put in a place of little importance.

Christian beliefs about women in worship

In Christianity a central belief is that all people are part of God's creation and should be treated with dignity and respect. There are many different views, however, as to whether men and women should have the same roles in worship. In the Catholic tradition women cannot be ordained as priests. The basis for this decision can be found in the New Testament which shows that while women could publicly pray and prophesy in church (1 Corinthians 11:1–16), they could not teach or have authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:11–14). In 1994 Pope John Paul II confirmed that this would remain the case.

'I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful.'

Ordinatio Sacerdotalis 4

Some Christian churches have recently begun to allow women to be priests or ministers (for example the Methodist church). In the Church of England the first woman to be ordained as a bishop was Libby Lane in 2015.

Tasks

Carefully read the quote above from Galatians and then answer the following questions.

- 1 According to St Paul why are people 'all one'?
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Christian attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?

Muslim attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Islam teaches that God created everyone as equal but different. As all are created by God, discrimination against any human is unjustified. The ummah crosses all gender, race and wealth boundaries.

'O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.'

Qur'an 49:13

When Muslims go on pilgrimage to Makkah they all wear simple white garments, showing they are equal before God. These garments are often used to cover their bodies when dead for the same reason.

The Qur'an teaches that men and women have equal religious and ethical rights:

'O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do.'

Qur'an 5:8

This does not mean that men and women are the same but that they have equally important different roles.

Muslim beliefs about women in worship

There is currently some different opinions among Muslims regarding the circumstances in which women may act as imams to lead a congregation in salat (prayer). The Qur'an does not mention whether females can lead prayers although historically it has been a male role. Many scholars look at interpretations of the

Hadith. In several passages there are mentions of two of Muhammad's wives, Aisha and Umm Salamah, leading prayers.

In some Sunni sects woman may be imam (leader) of a congregational prayer if the congregation consists of women alone. When this is allowed the woman stands among the congregation in the front row, instead of alone in front of the congregation as a male imam would do. In China there are nusi, which are mosques only for women, and men are not allowed to enter.

In many countries, Muslims have been active in campaigning for a woman-led prayer movement.

In Britain, Raheel Raza became the first Muslim-born woman to lead a mixed-

gender British congregation through Friday prayers at a small prayer session in Oxford. Raheel argues that nowhere in the Qur'an are female imams forbidden.

Raheel received death threats when she led a mixed-gender prayer session in Canada but she believes what she is doing is important for all women.



■ Raheel Raza

'It's not just about taking the job of an imam. It's about reminding the Muslim community that 50 per cent of its adherents are women who are equal to men. Women are equally observant, practising Muslims who deserve to be heard.'

Hadith an account describing the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

Tasks

According to the Qur'an:

'O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for God, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear God; indeed, God is Acquainted with what you do'

Qur'an 5:8

Carefully read the quote and then answer the following questions.

- 1 Identity five ways that Muslims could show justice to others.
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Muslim attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?



Jewish attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

Judaism teaches that prejudice and discrimination are incompatible with Jewish law as God created all equally. Judaism teaches that everyone is equal in the eyes of God and that everyone should be treated well. The laws that Moses received from God make it clear that people should live in harmony and care for others:

'When a proselyte comes to live in your land, do not hurt his feelings. The foreigner who becomes a proselyte must be exactly like one who is native born among you. You shall love him as [you love] yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am God your Lord.'

Leviticus 19:33–34

It is taught in the Mishnah that the bond between human beings is so great that doing harm to one person is like doing harm to the whole world.

'Therefore, humans were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul [of Israel], Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had destroyed a full world; and whoever saves one soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had saved a full world.'

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4.5 part 2

Jewish beliefs about women in worship

In both Orthodox and Reform Judaism women and men have equal rights although they may have different roles. In Reform and Liberal Judaism both men and women can become rabbis and women can sit wherever they want in a synagogue service.

Although they are allowed to lead prayers, there are still a number of things a female rabbi cannot do based on Jewish laws written in the Torah. She cannot:

- lead certain parts of the service
- serve as a judge on a Bet Din (a rabbinical court that decides things like conversions)
- be counted in a minyan (prayer service that requires a minimum of ten men). She may organise the service but cannot be counted as one of the ten.

In Orthodox Judaism women sit in a separate part of the synagogue. At present there are no women rabbis in the Orthodox movement in Britain despite an increasing campaign worldwide for female ordination.

Rachel Kohl Finegold

For Rachel Kohl Finegold, 33, from Montreal, being a Jewish educator wasn't enough. She wanted ordination to serve in a rabbinic role. After her first sermon she walked back down to the women's

section, where she was greeted with warm welcomes and congratulations. One woman grabbed her hand, looked her in the eye and said, 'We've been waiting for you'.

The hardest part is the first thing people see about me is that I'm female and they don't think beyond that right away. I'm not here to be the token woman, I'm here to do my job.



■ Rachel Kohl Finegold is a female rabbi



Tasks

In the Mishnah it states:

'Therefore, humans were created singly, to teach you that whoever destroys a single soul [of Israel], Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had destroyed a full world; and whoever saves one soul of Israel, Scripture accounts it as if [s]he had saved a full world.'

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4.5 part 2

Carefully read the quote and then answer the following questions.

- 1 According to the Mishnah, how should people behave towards one another?
- 2 What does this quote reveal about Jewish attitudes to prejudice and discrimination?

Humanist attitudes to prejudice and discrimination

H

Humanists accept the theory of evolution. They believe that all human beings are part of the same species 'Homo Sapiens' and share the same ancestors. Humanists recognise that there may be differences between people but they all share a common bond. They believe in treating people as individuals, not in stereotyping and not in discriminating against groups of people because of differences such as age, race or sex.

The actor and humanist Stephen Fry has spoken out against the damage that prejudice and discrimination can create. He has campaigned to counter the prejudice which often exists in society regarding mental illness. For Fry, like many other people, the key to countering prejudice is through education.

As a humanist I always try to treat other people as I want to be treated. I may be a different age or race to other people but I share a humanity.



■ Stephen Fry supporting a campaign to counter negative attitudes towards mental health

► Racism

Racism is discrimination against people on the basis of their race. Throughout history people from religious and non-religious beliefs have worked together to try to stop racism.

Campaigns have successfully changed the practices in many countries, making it illegal for people to discriminate against others because of their race. There are many education programmes in Britain which focus on explaining to students the dangers of racism and what to do if they see any racist actions. One such programme aims to tackle racism at football matches.

Show Racism the Red Card

Show Racism the Red Card is an anti-racist charity that has been growing from 1995, when Shaka Hislop donated £50 to a local anti-racism campaign in Newcastle upon Tyne. Show Racism the Red Card is now present in the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Ireland. The charity in Ireland was formally launched in 2006. It combats racism through using high profile sports stars to present an anti-racist message to young people and others. It works with schools and provides resources to help educate young people against racism and contribute towards integration.



Christian attitudes towards racial prejudice



Christian teachings promote the equality of all races, such as in the story of the good Samaritan.

Jesus' own actions also showed how important it was to treat all races as equal, healing men and women

from different races. The words and actions of Jesus have influenced many Christians throughout history to campaign against race discrimination.

Today there are many different Christian organisations in Britain that continues to work against race discrimination and support racial and religious harmony.

The Church of England's Committee for Minority and Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC):

- encourages minority ethnic people to become part of the ministry of the Church
- supports race awareness initiatives throughout society
- creates links with other faiths and cultures through inter-faith dialogue.

The Catholic Church works to oppose racism and to raise awareness of the importance of cultural diversity. This is led by the Catholic Association for Racial Justice (CARJ). Through its work it seeks 'to value, respect and celebrate the equality and dignity of all God's people'.

▶ Martin Luther King

For many Christians the teachings and actions of Martin Luther King continue to act as an inspiration in their fight against racism.

As a Baptist Minister, Martin Luther King was influenced by Jesus' teachings on love. In his campaign against the racism in the United States he adopted nonviolent protests to support civil rights for black Americans. People of all races and religions joined his protests and staged sit-ins and marches. Despite being imprisoned and suffering violence, Martin Luther King knew that retaliation with violence wasn't the answer. He followed Jesus' teachings to turn the other cheek and not return hate for hate.

Martin made many inspirational speeches, the nature of which he demonstrated through his actions.

A dream and inspiration

'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.'

For King, his dream and motivation was that one day people would not be discriminated against because of their race.

Acting on convictions

'I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law.'

King showed this in practice when he was imprisoned for leading nonviolent protests.



Forming a community

'We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.'

King organised groups of protestors, inspiring many through his ministry in churches.

Use of nonviolence

'Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Mankind must evolve for all human conflict a method

which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.'

Despite being threatened and physically attacked, King only ever used peaceful protest in his campaigns for equality. He led many nonviolent protest marches.

Task

Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of agape in Christianity (see page 128).

Complete the acrostic to show how Martin Luther King's beliefs, teachings and actions showed agape in practice. An example for **A** has been done for you.

Acting on his convictions, Martin Luther King went to prison for leading nonviolent protest.

G

A

P

E



Muslim attitudes towards racial prejudice

The Islamic creation story describes how God sent angels to earth to collect different types of soil in order to create the first man – Adam. The soil was of different colours, different strengths and from different parts of the earth. For many Muslims this shows that the descendants of Adam were destined to be as diverse as the handful of soil; to have different appearances, attributes and qualities. The Qur'an teaches that such diversity was all a part of God's plan for the world:

'And of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.'

Qur'an 30:22

There has been a long tradition of race equality in Islam, dating back to the actions and words of the Prophet Muhammad. When it was decided that a **muezzin** was to be established to recite the call to prayer, the Prophet Muhammad selected a former black slave Bilal ibn Rabah. The Prophet's last sermon showed how important the brotherhood (ummah) of Muslims is:

'All mankind is descended from Adam and Eve, an Arab is not better than a non-Arab and a non-Arab is not better than an Arab; a white person is not better than a black person, nor is a black person better than a white person except by piety and good actions. Learn that every Muslim is the brother of every other Muslim and that Muslims form one brotherhood.'

For many Muslims it has been important to challenge racism, even at a risk to their own lives. For example, Farid Esack, a Muslim university teacher was involved in the fight against the **apartheid** system in South Africa.

Apartheid was the systematic discrimination against the black population of South Africa. Esack established a Muslim anti-apartheid group and spoke at meetings against apartheid.

The Christian/Muslim Forum

Today many Muslims work to promote inter-faith dialogue, sharing their views with people of different beliefs to try and create a more just and tolerant society. One such group, the Christian/Muslim Forum has been doing that since 2006. Based in London, it brings together Christians and Muslims from around the country to build good relationships. It has four Christian ministers who are selected from different Christian Churches (Anglican, Catholic, Free Churches, Minority Traditions) and four Muslim Presidents who represent the different Sunni and Shi'a traditions. Through creating safe spaces, discussions are held which explore differences between and within Islam and Christianity. Through inter-faith dialogue and activities, the Forum seeks to educate and campaign for a greater understanding between religions.

We pray together that ignorance and racism will end.

We share festivals together. A break of fast was held at a local mosque.

We use internet forum, blogs and tweets to learn about each other's beliefs. We can ask each other questions and in this way break down our stereotypes and ignorance.

Apartheid a system of segregating people by races, which was used in South Africa.

Muezzin the person who calls Muslims to the mosque to pray.

Task

Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of ummah in Islam (see page 132).

Complete the acrostic to show how the Christian/Muslim Forum activities show ummah in action. An example for **U** has been done for you.

Unites Sunni and Shi'a Muslims in discussions about shared beliefs

M

M

A

H

Task

Earlier in the chapter we learnt about the importance of tzedakah in Judaism (see page 131).

Complete the acrostic to show how JCORE activities show tzedakah in action. An example for **T** has been done for you.

Taking donations of clothes and shoes to refugees.

Z
E
D
A
K
A
H



Jewish attitudes towards racial prejudice



Judaism teaches that everyone is descended from Adam and Eve and so are equal in the eyes of God and should be given equal respect. An important principle of Judaism is tzedakah, which is often translated as justice. This has inspired many Jews to seek justice through campaigning for racial harmony. In the civil rights movement in America and the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, many Jews took active roles.



■ Martin Luther King meeting with Jewish people

JCORE

The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE) campaigns against racism throughout Britain. Their work began in 1976 and focuses around the belief that concern for social justice should be an important part of Jewish identity. They argue that Jews have a duty both to work with others and to work for others in the struggle against discrimination. They consider that racism is still a fact of life in modern Britain. They run activities and campaigns to try to combat racism, believing that working together is the best way to tackle prejudice and discrimination. JCORE initiatives include:

- **Muslim Jewish task force:** A task force has been set up to provide a common voice on both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. The aim of the group is that neither Muslims nor Jews feel they are alone in tackling race hate directed against them and feel a responsibility towards each other.
- **Young neighbours:** Bringing together young Muslims and young Jews to campaign for and support asylum seekers to the UK.
- **Working with refugees:** A major focus of JCORE is campaigning for the rights of refugees and giving them practical support. This includes donating clothes, running charity events and befriending refugees who have recently arrived in Britain.

End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Discrimination
- Prejudice

Key teachings about:

- racism

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to describe what is meant by discrimination.
- 2 Why are people prejudiced? Write your answer in four bullet points.
- 3 In your own words explain what the term 'racial discrimination' means.
- 4 Select two of the following:
 - JCORE
 - Martin Luther King
 - Christian/Muslim Forum.

Explain for each three ways in which they counters discrimination.

Skills Link

- 1 Giving one example, state what is meant by 'discrimination'?
- 2 "Religions should do more to fight against racial prejudice and discrimination." Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

The Big Question

'Religions can't stop people being prejudiced.'

Your task

Evaluate the statement above, referring to at least four of the following ideas:

- sacred texts
- examples of religious leaders
- media
- education
- agape
- tzedakah
- ummah

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about **prejudice and discrimination**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote
 This means that/Because of this they Some/other Christians such as believe that
 This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they
 Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they
 Their beliefs do/do not differ because

■ Issues of wealth and poverty

► Wealth

Income and wealth in the UK

- The bottom fifth of the UK population have 8 per cent of the UK's total income; the top fifth have 40 per cent.
- Income and wealth in London and the South East is considerably higher than in other areas of the country, for example the North East.
- The top 10 per cent of the population hold 45 per cent of the wealth and the bottom 50 per cent have 8.7 per cent.
- In 2014 it was reported that the five richest families in the UK were worth more than the bottom 20 per cent of the whole population.

Source: Figures from The Equality Trust and other news sources

► The acquisition of wealth

As you can see from the statistics above, wealth is not evenly spread out across society. Some people are much richer than others. There are many ways in which people might get their wealth:

- Through working for a business and receiving an income. Some jobs have fantastically high salaries, for example sports stars and TV presenters. Other workers receive much lower pay.
- Some people start their own business. Some of these grow and become extremely profitable.
- Some people inherit wealth, maybe on the death of a relative.
- A few people get their wealth through criminal means, for example, fraud or burglary.
- Some people get wealth through activities such as gambling.

► The use of wealth

Britain is often described as being a materialistic society, which values money and the possessions that money can buy. Newspaper headlines often describe people rushing out to buy the latest mobile phone or designer handbag.

However, people don't only use their wealth to buy material goods and holidays. A report by the Charities Aid Foundation in 2015 found that the UK was Europe's most generous nation in terms of charitable giving. In 2015 75 per cent of UK adults donated to charity, and that was compared to a worldwide average of 31.5 per cent.

As well as giving to charities, people might use their wealth to help family and friends. For example, as property in the UK becomes more expensive compared to average wages, many parents are lending their children money so that they can buy a home.

Does money bring happiness?

The storyteller Anthony de Mello in *The Song of the Bird* tells how a wealthy businessman was horrified when he saw a fisherman resting by his boat, looking up to the sky.

Everyone agrees that we need enough money to survive. But when is enough money too much?

For many people there are difficult balances to be made regarding materialistic wealth and happiness. There is an old saying that 'Money can't buy happiness'.



Task

The musician Bob Marley once said:

'The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively.'

Look through this textbook and describe three situations where people have used their ability to 'affect those around them positively'.

► Poverty

Key Concepts



Relative poverty A standard of poverty measured in relation to the standards of a society in which a person lives, for example, living on less than x per cent of average UK income.



Absolute poverty An acute state of deprivation, whereby a person cannot access the most basic of their human needs.

We often use the term ‘poverty’ to refer to someone who is living in extremely poor circumstances. There are two levels of poverty:

- **Absolute poverty** – a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. It usually includes having no access to basic services, such as medicine or shelter.



Absolute poverty is when people fall below a global level of income; they may have no access to basic services

- **Relative poverty** – a level of income below the majority of one particular country.



Relative poverty means an income level below other people in the country you live in

We often don't think of people in the UK living in poverty as most people have access to accommodation and the state should provide some support for people who really need it, for example, council houses and monetary benefits. The UK is a very wealthy country compared to many others.

However, Oxfam indicates that there are 2 million malnourished people in the UK, with a further 3 million at risk of malnourishment. They state that food poverty is on the rise with increasing numbers of people relying on services like food banks, where they can get parcels of food and other essentials. The charity Barnardo's suggests that there are 3.7 million children living in poverty in the UK.

Worryingly, children who are born into poor families are more likely to develop chronic illnesses and less likely to do well in education than those children who are not. This means that they are more likely to continue to live in poverty as an adult.

Throughout the centuries, people have tried to support those who are living in poverty. Sometimes this has been through voluntary work, giving donations of money or making people aware of those who are living in absolute and relative poverty who often have no voice to speak out.

'Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.'

Nelson Mandela

Fairtrade

For many companies, being socially responsible is very important. This means that they will not exploit people or the environment.

Many companies are now Fairtrade Providers and are allowed to use the FAIRTRADE mark on their products.

This means that the products have been produced by small-scale farmer organisations or plantations that meet Fairtrade social, economic and environmental standards. Fairtrade works to benefit small-scale farmers and workers and those who are marginalised.

Christian attitudes to wealth and poverty



Acquisition and use of wealth

Christianity teaches that a person's value should be judged by their actions and not by what they possess or how much money they have. Having wealth is not necessarily bad or wrong but there are ethical considerations about how Christians gain their wealth and how it is used.

Christianity does not state whether certain jobs should or should not be allowed. Rather, Christians need to ask themselves: 'Is the job exploiting or helping people?'

Many Christians are against gambling because it encourages a love of money for its own sake. They also believe that gambling and lotteries encourage greed. Some denominations refuse to take part in any form of gambling. The Society of Friends (Quakers) and Methodists, for example, are opposed to gambling as they believe it is gaining at the expense of others. They also believe that it promotes the view that having lots of money automatically produces happiness.

Jesus taught that wealth doesn't make people happy and can lead to greed. In Matthew 6, Jesus warns his disciples that money can take the place of God in their lives and that they must be careful to remain faithful to him. When a rich young ruler wanted to follow Jesus he was told that to do so he should sell his possessions and give his money to the poor. Today, members of some religious orders take a vow of poverty to give up everything they possess.

Helping those in poverty

All of the Gospels show that Jesus taught about the care of the poor. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25) teaches that God will judge people not on how much wealth they have gained but on their treatment of the poor.

In Luke 16 Jesus tells a story about a man who lived in great luxury. At his gate lay a poor beggar called Lazarus who was covered in sores but he took no notice of him. Eventually, they both died. Lazarus went to heaven



but the rich man went to hell. The rich man asked that Lazarus should come to hell to cool his tongue with a drop of water. He also asked that Lazarus be sent back to earth to warn his brothers to repent so that they would

never join him in hell. Both requests were denied by Abraham who told the rich man that if his brothers did not believe the Scripture, neither would they believe a messenger, even if he came straight from heaven.



Task

Read the story of Lazarus carefully. Explain which of the following you think the story teaches?

- (a) Spend your money while you are alive.
- (b) Your actions on earth will be rewarded after death.
- (c) People must pray if they are to go to heaven.
- (d) Rich and poor can go to heaven.
- (e) People should look after those who have less money.
- (f) Riches don't automatically get you into heaven.



I give 10 per cent of all my wealth to charity. The money I have came from God and belongs to God.

There are many different Christian charities working to tackle poverty in Britain and globally. Some of these are connected with a particular denomination such as CAFOD and St Vincent de Paul, which both come from the Catholic tradition. There are also **ecumenical** Christian charities such as Christian Aid.

Ecumenical representing or promoting unity between a number of different Christian churches.

For many Christians supporting charities either through donations or voluntary work is an important part of showing their faith. Some Christians, give a tithe or set amount of money each year to charity.

Case study: Christian Aid

What is Christian Aid?

Christian Aid is a Christian charity working in partnership with local organisations in over 60 countries to help those in need – regardless of religion, ethnicity or nationality. It aims to stop poverty and challenge systems that favour the rich over the poor and marginalised. It does this by organising projects run by partners in the different countries and educating people about the causes of poverty through running campaigns and Fairtrade activities.

How does the work of Christian Aid reflect Christian teachings and values?

It works on the basis of a belief in one God who loves all and the dignity of all human life.

Its values include:

- **Love and solidarity:** We are called to love and care for one another in compassion and humility, as we stand alongside all those who struggle against poverty, powerlessness and injustice.
- **Dignity and respect:** We are convinced that every human being has innate dignity. All people are of equal worth, which is why we place honesty and respect for others at the heart of what we do.
- **Justice and equality:** We understand that where people lack power, poverty prevails, so we support work that empowers individuals and communities. We fight injustice and inequality with courage, hope and determination, challenging the structures and systems that prevent people from rising out of poverty.
- **Cooperation and partnership:** Our work is rooted in a spirit of cooperation and we affirm the value of acting in partnership with others. We work with and for the churches, as well as with other faith and secular groups. We also engage with other key actors, including civil society, government and the private sector, in various ways and on various levels.
- **Accountability and stewardship:** We are accountable for how we use the resources entrusted to us, ensuring that our decision-making is open and transparent. We measure our impact and are always striving to improve our performance. We are committed to being effective stewards of the planet's scarce resources and caring for the earth for the sake of future generations.

Source: Christian Aid website

Task

Christian Aid has five values that they show through the work they do. For each value select a picture from this book that you think illustrates that value.

- love and solidarity
- dignity and respect
- justice and equality
- cooperation and partnership
- accountability and stewardship.

Muslim attitudes to wealth and poverty



In Islam, all wealth is a gift from God – humans are caretakers of God's wealth, and will be judged by their use of it. Muslims have a duty to support others and care for the poor and those in need. It is important that a family's needs are met first and that Zakah is collected on surplus money.

Acquisition and use of money

Muslims are required to live according to the Qur'an and therefore some occupations are forbidden. As receiving interest (riba) on any loans is forbidden, Muslims should not become money lenders. Islamic banks set up ways that people are able to borrow money without the bank making interest on the loan.

The Qur'an forbids gambling (qimar) or any way of gaining money through chance:

'O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.'

Qur'an 5:90

The fact that the Qur'an forbids doing any work connected with gambling has caused difficulties when the money made from lotteries is used to support charitable causes. For many Muslims it would be wrong to accept this money.

'Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in God, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and who gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveller, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives Zakah; [those who] fulfil their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous'

Qur'an 2:177

Helping those in poverty

Charity is an important part of Muslim life. Although it is one of the Five Pillars of Islam (see page 250) it should be given through love and not through a sense of duty.

There are different types of giving:

- **Zakah:** Both Sunni and Shi'a Muslims make a charity (Zakah) payment of 2.5 per cent of their wealth every year. This goes to support the poor and those in need.
- **Khums:** In addition to Zakah, Shi'a Muslims are expected to pay Khums, a wealth tax of 20 per cent of their savings. This money is paid to Muslim scholars and community leaders for the welfare of the community.
- **Sadaqah:** It is a duty for all Muslims to pay Zakah once a year, but Islam also teaches that voluntary giving is important too. Sadaqah is any good deed done out of compassion or generosity; it could be a gift of time, helping others or a donation to a charity.
- **Zakat-ul-Fitr:** This additional donation, given at the end of Ramadan, goes to the poor. It allows everyone, even those in poverty, to eat a generous meal at Id-ul-Fitr.

Muslim children often learn about the importance of Zakah by reciting simple poems.

We have to share with those in need
And not give in to thoughts of greed,
Zakah then helps us in this way,
Lest we should err and go astray.
The receiver and the giver of aid,
All feel good when Zakah is paid,
And society as a whole will be,
Enriched by acts of charity.

Mymona Hendricks *Muslim Poems
for Children*

There are many Muslim organisations and charities that work in Britain and globally to help Muslims and non-Muslims in need.

Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief aims to help those in need by upholding the principles of Islam. Founded in Britain in 1984, Islamic Relief now works in over 40 countries. It responds to disasters and emergencies as well as providing long-term support with sustainable economic and social development such as providing shelter, healthcare and education.



How does the work of Islamic Relief reflect Muslim teachings and values?

'Our Vision

Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a caring world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled and people respond as one to the suffering of others'

Working with those in need reflects the teachings from the Qur'an:

'Because of that, We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land – it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.

And our messengers had certainly come to them with clear proofs. Then indeed many of them, [even] after that, throughout the land, were transgressors.'

Qur'an 5:32

The work of Islamic Relief reflects the key values of Islam:

- Compassion – giving support in disasters
- Justice – raising awareness of marginalised voices through the media
- Custodianship – recycling and selling donated clothes in the UK
- Sincerity – sponsoring over 30,000 orphans in one year
- Excellence – signing the Red Cross Code of Conduct, an international set of standards on working in disaster zones.



■ Fundraising for Islamic Relief

Jewish attitudes to wealth and poverty



Attitudes to wealth

Judaism teaches that humans are custodians of wealth for God. It is not considered wrong to be rich but what is important is how you earn and use your wealth.

Work is considered an important part of Jewish life but it is also important that Jews recognise Shabbat on which no work is done.

Task

Using pages 310–12 on Shabbat, explain how an Orthodox Jew might respond to the following question. Write an email back in response.

We would like to offer you a job with our company but you would need to work on a Saturday. Why do you state this would be a problem?

The types of work that are permissible for Jews depends upon how far they observe the teachings of the Torah. For some it is important that the laws of **kashrut** are kept and so, for example, they would not work in factories where they would have to handle pork products.

Kashrut Jewish dietary laws.

Pushke box money boxes displayed in Jewish homes to encourage charitable giving.

It is forbidden to be dishonest or cheat in any business transaction.

'When you sell . . . or buy [property] from your neighbour, do not cheat one another.'

Leviticus 25:14

Maintaining strict honesty in business dealings is important and is judged by God. One who robs or cheats the public has no one to repay and can never actually atone for his crime.

Helping those in poverty

'Tzedakah' comes from the Hebrew word meaning justice or righteousness. The belief is that giving money to those in need is not only a duty and source of justice but also a right of the poor. The rabbis emphasise the need to ensure that the dignity of the poor person is maintained when charity is given. The guidelines for giving tzedakah vary from community to community. The general guideline is that all Jews should give one-tenth of their income to charity. The receiving charity can include one's synagogue, educational institution or organisation. At most Jewish festivals contributions are made to charity and most Jewish families have a **pushke box** in which money is donated at Shabbat.

What is Tzedek?

Tzedek is a Jewish charity which began in Britain in 1990 and works to reduce absolute poverty and care for those involved in national disasters. Believing that poverty is a human-made problem, they seek solutions not just by giving charity but by seeking to increase social justice in the world.

How does the work of Tzedek reflect Jewish teachings and value

'When a man leaves the world, neither silver nor gold nor precious stones nor pearls accompany him, but only the Torah he has learnt and the good works he has carried out.'

Mishnah

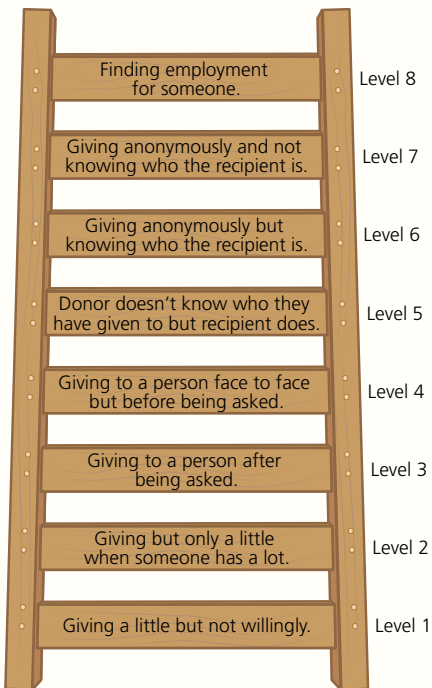
Many Jewish values are reflected through the work of Tzedek:

- **Ahavtah et HaGer (you shall love the stranger)** – Jewish traditions teach us to see the world globally. The work they do stretches beyond racial or religious boundaries.
- **Naaseh v'nishma (we will do and we will understand)** – Awareness, knowledge and learning lead to deeper commitments and actions. Tzedek raises awareness of social injustices through schools and education programmes.



Maimonides eight levels of charity

In the Mishnah Torah the Jewish philosopher Maimonides identified eight levels of charity. Although written in the twelfth century, these are still relevant to today.



Task

1 Which pictures illustrate each of the Maimonides' levels shown on the left?

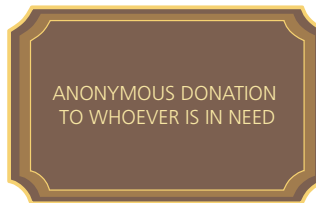
(a)



(e)



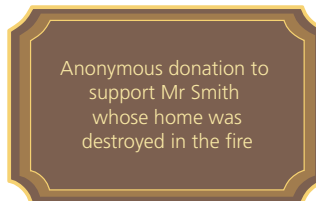
(b)



(f)



(c)



(g)



(d)



(h)



2 Why do you think levels 7 and 8 are the highest forms of charity?

Humanist attitudes to wealth and poverty

For humanists it is important to care about poverty because of shared humanity. An important belief of humanists is that people should treat others in the way they want to be treated. This means that their actions should be fair and just. Humanists do not believe that poverty and suffering is caused by fate or is a punishment for previous actions. For many humanists it is important to consider why there is poverty and to try to create a world that is socially just through active campaigning.

► End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Absolute poverty
- Relative poverty

Key teaching about:

- wealth and poverty

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what is meant by absolute poverty.
- 2 Identify three religious charities and the religion they are connected to.
- 3 Explain the attitudes to gaining money in two religious traditions.

The Big Question

'We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to mankind.'

Martin Luther King

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

In your answer you should include references to at least four of the following:

- Absolute wealth
- Relative wealth
- Social justice
- Human dignity
- Absolute poverty
- Charity
- Human rights

Skills Link

- 1 Explain, from two different religions or two religious traditions, attitudes to gaining and using wealth.

Task

For both of the religions (or denominations) that you are studying, you need to explain in detail religious teachings about the **acquisition and use of wealth**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity and a second one for your other chosen religion or denomination. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote
This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that
This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they
Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Issues of Human Rights

Questions on charities and people

In many units you will be expected to explain or describe the work of various charities or people.

None of these questions will expect you to give a biography of the person or charity. Questions will ask for a particular focus, which must be the core of your response.

Look at the following question:

Describe one example of when someone's personal religious conviction has conflicted with the laws of a country. (5)

Firstly, write down:

- How many marks are there?
- What is the question asking me to do? Which of these do I think is correct?

'I need to write about a religion that has disagreed with the laws of a country.'

'I need to write about a person whose religious beliefs have conflicted with the laws or practices of a country.'

'I need to write about how religion helps those in need.'

Using religious and sacred text references

In (b), (c) and (d) questions references to sacred texts should be included in your answers as evidence. They are important to support a point you have made. You will need to practise how you use sacred texts.

Some candidates lose marks because they have a scattergun approach. They include a reference but without any further detail. For example:

Christians don't believe in racism, for example the story of the Good Samaritan.

Or

Christians don't believe in racism because of Jesus' teachings.

Other candidates describe the whole of a story from a sacred text but with no reference to how it relates to the question.

There are many different ways that sacred texts can be used as evidence, for example:

Analysing the importance of the text for action today:

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan is demonstrating more than the importance of being kind. It shows that people considered enemies should actively support each other in need.

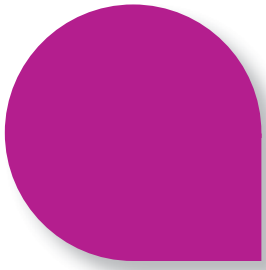
Briefly describing the text reference in relation to practice today:

The actions of the Prophet Muhammad, when he saved the ants from the fire, shows how Muslims should care for all living things.

Making direct reference to a textual quote to support an answer:

Many Christians refer to Genesis chapter 1, 26-27 to show the importance of human dignity.

Select three sacred texts from this chapter. For each, practise how you would use them as supporting evidence in a point you are making.



Christianity

► The Big Picture

Key Concepts



Omnibenevolent The state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Omnipotent The all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

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

Incarnation God becoming human in the form of Jesus.

Atonement The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

Resurrection The belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.

Sacraments An outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God, for example baptism, Eucharist.

Evangelism Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith.

Core Questions



what is monotheism?

Do you think Britain is becoming a more secular society?

Why are Walsingham and Taizé important places for Christians?

Why has church attendance declined in Britain?

Do you need to go to church to be a Christian?

What is a sacrament?

Why are there different types of prayer?

Why are there different Christian denominations?

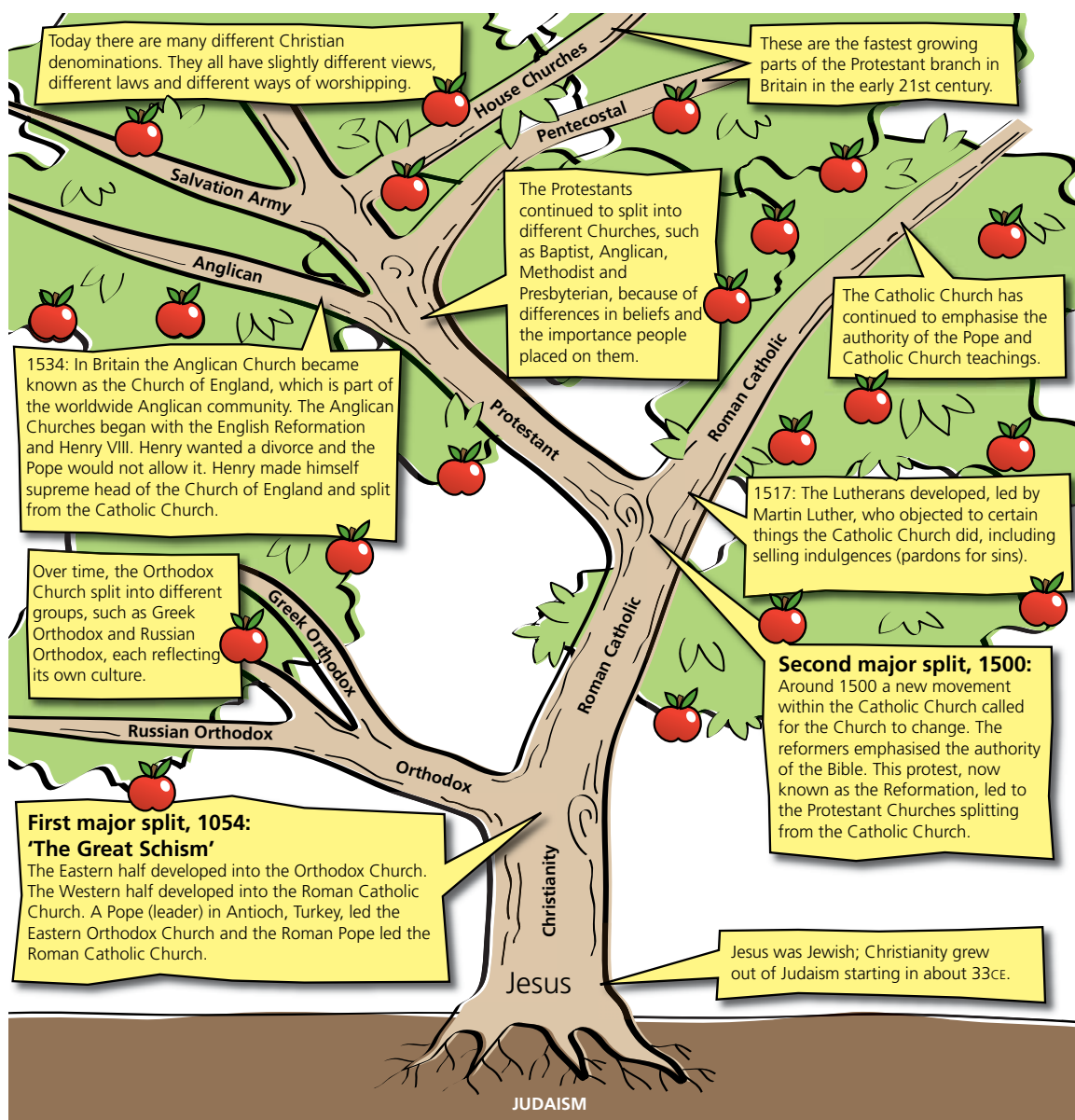
Pluralist a society where a number of religions are followed alongside each other.

Secular a society where religious beliefs and practices are increasingly less important to a growing number of people.

Overview

The religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, but also diverse. Today people follow many different religions and some people have no religious belief at all. In this **pluralist** and more **secular** society, Christianity remains an important faith for millions of people in Britain; there are many denominations which make up the Christian family. The diagram below shows how these denominations developed.

In the next chapter you will study the main beliefs, teachings and practices of Christianity, including different views and practices across the denominations.



Task

Look at the tree diagram. Come up with a caption to show how it represents the diversity of Christianity today.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 164. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.

▶ Christian beliefs

To understand Christianity you need to look at Christian beliefs about the nature of God, including God as the Trinity.

The word 'Christian' literally means 'follower of Christ', so central to any study of Christianity is the understanding of the main key Christian beliefs about Jesus. The most important beliefs about Jesus include his incarnation, his crucifixion and death, his resurrection and his ascension to heaven.

What Christians know about Jesus' life comes from the Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible. The Bible, which some Christians believe is the inspired word of God, has been revealed by God as a source of authority to help people live in a good way. The Bible is an important book for all Christians but there are different ways of interpreting the Bible. For some Christians there are also other sources of authority, such as conscience.

In the Book of Genesis in the Bible there are ideas about the creation of the world, and in these accounts beliefs are expressed about the nature and role of human beings on earth.

Christians believe that Jesus' death brought salvation, which means that after death humans can hope to spend eternity in heaven with God. There are different beliefs about sin, but all Christians believe that they should try and live a good life following Jesus' example. God will judge how people live their lives and this influences what happens to them after death.

▶ Christian practices

Christians believe that in order to develop a relationship with God they must 'worship' or give worth to God in their lives. There are many different forms of worship across the different Christian traditions and denominations.

Two of the most important practical expressions of Christian faith are baptism and sharing in the Eucharist. The Catholic and Anglican Churches regard these as sacraments but many other Protestant denominations do not.

Pilgrimages are an expression of faith, and two important examples of Christian pilgrimage are the shrine at Walsingham in Britain and the monastic community of Taizé in France.

Celebrations are important religious practices, and the two most important festivals in the Christian calendar in Britain are Christmas and Easter. Both are rich in symbolism and ritual and both commemorate important historical events in the life of Jesus.

In modern Britain the Church has an important sense of mission, and part of this is shown through evangelism and the need for Church growth.

The work of many charities is a practical expression of Christian beliefs in action. Tearfund is a Christian charity the aim of which is to help the poor in many countries throughout the world.

Christians have been persecuted since the beginning of Christianity and this continues in parts of the world. All of the 12 disciples and St Paul were **martyred** for their faith.

Finally the Church works for reconciliation in the world. An example of this is the work of the World Council of Churches, which seeks to bring Christian Churches together.

Martyr a person who is put to death for not renouncing their religion

5

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

Monotheism belief in one true God.

■ The nature of God

‘What is God like?’ When Christians talk and write about the nature of God they are essentially trying to answer this question.

Christians believe there is only one God, this belief in one God is known as **monotheism**, so Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Christians use a variety of words to describe the nature of God.

- ▶ omnipotent (all powerful)
- ▶ omnipresent (everywhere)
- ▶ omniscient (all knowing)
- ▶ omnibenevolent (all loving)
- ▶ transcendent (outside of this world).

Christians also believe that God is timeless and eternal.

All of these ideas are found in the Christian Bible, which is made up of the Old and New Testaments and believed to be part of God’s revelation to humanity.

God is the creator and the giver of all life:

‘In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.’

Genesis 1:1

All Christians believe that God created everything and is still involved with the world in a mysterious way. In the Genesis text God is clearly seen as the creator of the universe and all that it contains.

Humankind is made in a special way in the image of God.

‘Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness . . .”

Genesis 1:26

This spiritual likeness enables all human beings to have some understanding of God’s nature. Christians believe all we know about God is through God showing or revealing himself to people and this process is known as ‘revelation’.



What is God like?

▶ God is omnipotent

Key Concept

Omnipotent The all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

Read the detailed account found in Exodus 7:11

The story describes how God is able to show his power over nature and ultimately over human life.

Many of the stories in the Old Testament are a revelation about the power of God. In the Book of Exodus, which tells the story of God's relationship with the Jews, one of the most well-known stories is the story of the ten plagues. God instructed Moses, who was a Jew living in Egypt, to lead all the other Jews (who were slaves in Egypt) out of the country. The Egyptian pharaoh refused to let them go and God sent a series of plagues down on the Egyptian people. When the pharaoh sent his army to stop the Jews leaving Egypt, God parted the Red Sea to let the Jews cross, but brought it crashing down on the Egyptian army. The account shows that the Jews believed God was all powerful and in control of nature.

'Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided ...'

Exodus 14:21

Christians today may debate whether the plagues were miraculous events or a sequence of natural disasters but what all Christians agree upon is that the story is a demonstration of God's power in the freeing of the Jews from slavery.

The immensity of God's power is also shown in the creation story (see page 174).

▶ God is omnibenevolent

Key Concept

Omnibenevolent The state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Tasks

- 1 Create a mind map to explain how Christians describe God. Give a definition and a reason for each of God's characteristics.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe God is omnipotent, making reference to the Bible. Include the following terms; exodus, slavery, Jews, control.
- 3 Choose one of the biblical quotes demonstrating God's omnibenevolence. Explain how it proves God's love for humanity.

Christians believe that God is all loving. Here are three texts about the importance of God's love.

'But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.'

Psalms 86:15

Psalms 86 was attributed to King David and in the quotation the writer expresses the idea that God is merciful and is rich in love.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

John 3:16

The Gospel of John expresses the fundamental belief that because God loved humanity he sent Jesus to earth so that people could have eternal life.

'No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 8:37–39

In this passage St Paul writes of how God's love is more powerful than anything else.

► Why is there evil and suffering?

Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher (341–270 BCE), wrote the following about God and the idea of evil and suffering.

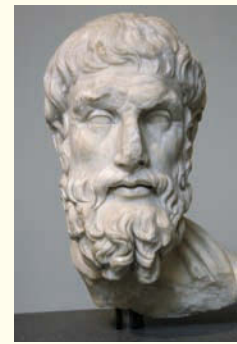
'Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?'

Epicurus lived at a time when the Greeks believed in many gods but the question about the relationship of God and suffering is very well expressed in this quotation.



Tasks

- 1 Read the quote from Epicurus. Explain why suffering causes a problem for believing in God.
- 2 Outline what is meant by the term 'theodicy'.
- 3 Create a mind map identifying the different explanations for why there is suffering in the world.



For many people, the idea that God allows evil and suffering in the world is one of the reasons why they find it difficult to believe in God. Such people will often describe themselves as atheist (believing in no god) or agnostic (unsure whether there is a god). It appears difficult to believe in any god who allows evil and suffering in the world. If God is all powerful or **omnipotent**, then why does he not stop evil and suffering? If God is all good or **omnibenevolent**, then why would a god who is kind and a god of love allow evil or suffering to be created in the first place? Or allow suffering to continue? These are difficult questions for all people of faith.

For Christians, suffering is seen as an essential part of human life and there are a number of arguments about why evil and suffering exist in the world. The arguments are known as 'theodicies'. It is a complex topic. In very simple terms some of the reasons given for the existence of evil and suffering are:

- God has given each person free will and people must make their own choices. Some of the choices people make cause evil events and suffering.
- There is a force for evil in the world, sometimes characterised as the devil/satan. Traditionally the devil was believed to be a fallen angel, thrown out of heaven when he disobeyed God.
- God shares in our suffering.
- Suffering is a test.
- Suffering is a result of sin.
- How we deal with suffering gives us the opportunity to become better people – it is soul-shaping.



Why a loving God would allow innocent people to suffer is a major issue for religious people.

The story of Job

'Then Job replied to the Lord:
"I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be
thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this
that obscures my plans without
knowledge?' Surely I spoke of
things I did not understand, things
too wonderful for me to know.
You said, 'Listen now, and I will
speak; I will question you, and
you shall answer me.' My ears
had heard of you but now my
eyes have seen you. Therefore
I despise myself and repent in
dust and ashes.'"

Job 42:1–6

'Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job?
There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who
fears God and shuns evil."

"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. "Have you not put
a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You
have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are
spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike
everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your
power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord'

Book of Job 1:8–12



Job is reduced to sitting on a dung heap while his friends look on after God allows Satan to take away his wealth and family.

In the Old Testament there is a 'case study' of a man called Job. In the Book of Job we read of a wealthy man who lives in a land called Uz, with his large family and flocks. He is described as a blameless and upright man who is always careful to avoid doing evil. In the story Satan appears before God in heaven. Satan argues that Job is only good because God has blessed him. Satan challenges God. He claims that if he is given permission to punish Job, Job will turn and curse God. God allows Satan to torment Job to test him and see if he turns from God. This is described in 1:8–12 in the extract above.

The two questions, 'Why do we suffer?' and 'Why do good and innocent people suffer so much?' are part of this story as it considers the universal theme of the good person who suffers.

In the story, Job receives the news that his flocks, servants and ten children have all died. Job still blesses God in his prayers. Satan appears in heaven again and God allows Satan to test Job again. Job is afflicted with terrible sores and his wife encourages him to curse God, but Job refuses. Three of his friends visit him and they discuss why Job is suffering. Job questions humankind's relationship with God. He laments the injustice of God allowing wicked people to prosper while he and other innocent people suffer so much. However, in Job 42:1–6 (above) Job shows that though God's ways are beyond human understanding, he has faith in God and understands his own place in the world.

Tasks

- 1 Briefly retell the Story of Job. Ensure you identify who he is and the order of the suffering he encounters and the advice he receives. Tip: This could be done as a timeline or flow chart.
- 2 Explain what the Story of Job teaches Christians about suffering.



Key Concept

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

The Trinity

Christians believe in the ‘oneness’ of God. However, they often speak of the **Trinity**. This is the belief that God is one but is made up of three persons:

- ▶ God the Father
- ▶ the Son Jesus Christ
- ▶ the Holy Spirit (or Paraclete).

Christians are often blessed in church services by a minister with a reference to this belief. Catholics will often bless themselves by making the sign of the cross and reciting this prayer.

‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.’



God the father



Jesus Christ

Incarnation the way in which God becomes ‘flesh’ or human in the form of Jesus.

God the father

Jesus taught his followers to refer to God as the Father. This refers to the all-powerful, all-knowing part of God, who created the world. Christians also believe that it shows the caring, personal relationship between humans and God, like that between a child and their father.

Jesus Christ

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. For Christians, he is God in human form. This belief is known as the **incarnation**.

Christians believe that through becoming human as Jesus, God revealed something of himself to the world.

God the Holy Spirit

Christians believe that after his resurrection (see pages 181–82) Jesus rose up to heaven. They believe that God then sent the Holy Spirit or ‘Paraclete’ into the world. Christians believe the Holy Spirit guides Christians to live their lives in the best way possible. The Holy Spirit is able to give comfort, courage, inspiration and guidance to all Christians, and helps people to believe in Jesus and strengthen their faith. It also helps Christians to understand and interpret the Bible



The Holy Spirit represented as a dove in a stained glass window in St Peter's Basilica in Rome.

as the word of God. Christians believe the Holy Spirit intervenes in the world in a miraculous way and is present during worship. In special church services, such as baptism and marriage, Christians believe they are really in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Charismatic Christians, such as Pentecostals, believe the Holy Spirit empowers people to **speak 'in tongues'**. This type of worship may be very lively as people feel they are directly moved by the spirit of God.

Why do Christians believe in the Trinity

The belief in the Trinity is based, on passages from the New Testament and, in the two examples which follow, on the words of Jesus himself.

'I and the Father are one.'

John 10:30

'Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves."

John 14:6–11

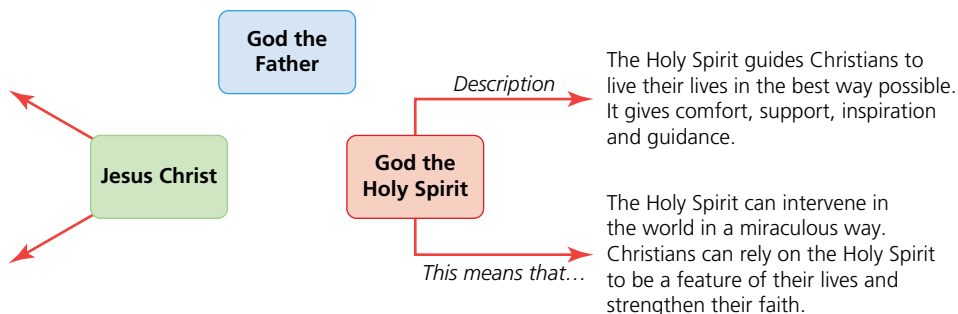
Both of these passages are taken from the Gospel of John. In the first passage Jesus clearly says that he is one with God. In the second, Jesus talks about his special and unique relationship with God.

Tasks

- 1 Create a key word table for the following terms:

Key term	Definition
Incarnation	
Charismatic Christians	
Speaking in tongues	

- 2 Copy and complete the diagram below, using it to explain the different parts of the trinity.



- 3 Explain why Christians believe in the Trinity. Include at least one quote in your answer.

► The Apostles' Creed

The most important Christian beliefs about the nature of God are contained in a creed, which is a statement of beliefs. The Apostles' Creed may be recited in church either on Sundays or at solemn occasions, such as a baptism. On some occasions the more detailed and longer Nicene Creed may be recited.

Tasks

Look at the bullet points below stating the beliefs shown in the Apostles' Creed. For each one identify the part of the Apostles' Creed that expresses that belief.

Resurrection has two distinct meanings:

- 1 It is used to refer to the Christian belief that Jesus rose from the dead after his death and burial.
- 2 It is used to refer to the idea that the human soul lives on after death and in the resurrection on Judgement Day.

The Apostles' Creed

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

*He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.*

*He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

*He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.*

*He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.*

Amen.

Tasks

- 1 In one sentence, summarise the Apostles' Creed.
- 2 Explain briefly why the Apostles' Creed is important for Christians.
- 3 In a detailed paragraph (approximately 6–8 sentences) summarise the main beliefs contained within the Apostles' Creed. Aim to include the following terms: God, Jesus, Judgement, resurrection, Creator, Holy Spirit.

The creed is a simple statement of the most important Christian beliefs which all Christians adhere to. Whatever the Christian tradition or denomination, all Christians sign up to the beliefs stated in the creed.

The most important beliefs in the Apostles' Creed are as follows:

- God is an all-powerful creator.
- Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.
- There will be a Day of Judgement when God will judge how each person has lived their life.
- There is one holy and universal Church.
- God will forgive our sins.
- There will be resurrection of the body and an eternal afterlife.

■ Creation

‘How was the universe and earth made?’ is one of the so-called fundamental questions.

Many people today look to scientific explanations, such as the Big Bang to give an answer to this question.

For all Christians what is important is that God is the creator of the universe. They believe that whatever the exact process was that created the universe, God is the overall architect of that creation. It is the ‘spirit of God’ which is the source of all life and creation (see page 39). There are two accounts of creation in the Bible; Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

There are a number of major events in the biblical Creation accounts:

- ▶ creation of the universe
- ▶ creation of the earth
- ▶ creation of Adam and Eve (or humankind)
- ▶ the temptation of Adam and Eve
- ▶ the fall of humankind from grace.

► Genesis 1

The biblical account of the creation in Chapter 1 of the Book of Genesis, begins:

‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.’

Genesis 1:1–3

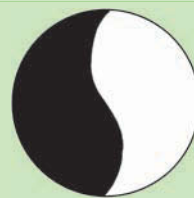


The Big Bang is the idea that about 13,700 million years ago all the matter in the universe was concentrated at a single point. A huge explosion – a Big Bang – sent this spiralling outwards, eventually creating the universe as we know it today. Scientists believe they have found evidence for the Big Bang, including that the universe is still expanding due to the force of the explosion and that the energy from the explosion can still be detected.

Genesis 1 shows how God created the universe over seven days. 'And God saw that it was good' is a phrase used to describe each stage of Creation.

Day 1 – God created night and day:

God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.



Day 2 – God created the heavens:

And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven.



Day 3 – God created land and plants:

And God said, 'Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. And God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth.'



Day 4 – God created the sun, moon and stars:

And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also.



Day 5 – God created birds and fish:

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens.'



Day 6 – God created living creatures including man:

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'



Day 7 – God rested:

And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done.



► Genesis 2

In Genesis 2 Adam lives in paradise in the Garden of Eden. God creates a companion for Adam from his rib, and his companion is Eve:

'Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.'

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man"

Genesis 2:22–23

God gives Adam and Eve one command which is not to eat from the tree of knowledge that grows in the Garden of Eden.

'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."

Genesis 3:2–3

The Genesis creation story is clear that humankind is unique among God's creation as humans were created in God's image.

► Genesis 3: The Fall

The nature of humankind is that people are made in the image of God but sinful and in need of God's forgiveness. Humankind has a clear purpose in the creation account. People have 'dominion' or power over the earth but this must be exercised through stewardship on God's behalf.

Genesis 3 describes an event which Christians call the 'Fall', when Adam and Eve are tempted by the devil, in the form of a serpent, to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge against God's will.

The devil or serpent claims that the only reason God doesn't want Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge is because it would make them as knowledgeable as God. Although Eve first resists the serpent, eventually she gives in to temptation and eats the fruit and then gives some to Adam.

They confess to God what they have done and as punishment he sends them out of the Garden of Eden to live somewhere else on the earth. They are no longer allowed to eat from the tree of life, which has given them eternal life, so death enters the world.

This is very significant for Christians as it represents the point when the perfect relationship between humans and God was broken. Because of this event most Christians believe all humans are born with 'original sin'. It is the reason why it was necessary for Jesus to die on the cross, as his death paid for human sin and restored the broken relationship with God. This will be covered in more detail on pages 179–81.

Tasks

- 1 What does Genesis 2 teach Christians about humankind?
- 2 When Christians refer to 'The Fall', what event from the Bible are they referring to?
- 3 Describe two reasons why 'The Fall' is significant for Christians.

► Interpretations of the Genesis creation story

Christians have a wide range of different views on how the Genesis account should be interpreted:

- Some fundamentalist Christians believe the story to be absolutely true in every detail. They are said to have a literal interpretation of the creation story.
- Other Christians believe the story is more symbolic (metaphorical) and myth-like in nature and that the account needs to be interpreted. They do not believe every detail of the story to be literally accurate or true.

These different understandings of the creation story are due to diverse opinions between Christian denominations about how the Bible should be read and interpreted: literally or non-literally.

For example, there are diverse views on how the word 'day' in the Genesis creation story should be interpreted. A literal Christian may accept the term 'day' in the literal sense so that a day becomes 24 hours. They would therefore reject any scientific theory that said the universe has developed over millions of years.

Many Christians, however, may see the term 'day' as representing a longer period of time, so the seven 'days' of creation could actually represent millions of years. This means they can believe in both the creation story and the scientific theory that the Big Bang started the development of the universe. This would be a non-literal interpretation.

Regardless of whether Christians believe in the Big Bang theory, all Christians believe that God was the ultimate creator of the universe.

Tasks

- 1 Reproduce the table below, explaining the different interpretations of creation in Genesis.

Attitude to the Creation story	Interpretation
Literal	They believe that..... 'Day' means
Non-literal	They believe that..... 'Day' means

- 2 Why are there differing interpretations of the Genesis account of Creation?
- 3 Explain the four key beliefs about creation that most Christians agree on.

► The role of the Word and the Spirit in creation

There is also an account of the creation in the Gospel of John:

'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. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

John 1:1–5

You will see the repeated use of 'Word' in the text of John. There are different views within Christianity as to what is meant by it. Some people believe that 'Word' refers to God's creative self-expression and the purpose and plans that he put in place as he created the universe.

However, most Christians understand the 'Word' to be a reference to Jesus, the second part of the Trinity. For the majority of Christians, John 1:1, and the belief that the 'Word' is Jesus, are central to the belief that Jesus is God as part of the Holy Trinity.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

They believe this line clearly states that Jesus (the Word) was present at the beginning of creation and that he is God.

Jesus Christ

Christians believe there are a number of important events in the life of Jesus. Four of the most important events are:

- ▶ the Incarnation (God becomes Man)
- ▶ the crucifixion and death of Jesus
- ▶ the resurrection of Jesus
- ▶ Jesus' ascension to heaven.

Atonement the belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

Some Christians believe Jesus' life and death is an act of **atonement** for the sins of the world and that salvation is offered to all those who believe this.

All of these events are recorded in the Gospels.

Incarnation

Key Concept

Incarnation God becoming human in the form of Jesus.

Tasks

- 1 Write the sub-heading 'Key events in the Life of Jesus'. Identify the four key events that you will be examining as a bullet list.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe Jesus was divine. Include four different examples in your answer.

Some Christians believe that Jesus was God **incarnated**. This means 'God made flesh' or God in human form. Jesus was not conceived in the same way as other humans, through sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. Mary, Jesus' mother, was told by an angel that she would give birth to a child named Jesus. She was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus.

This passage from the Gospel of Luke describes Mary being told that she will give birth to Jesus:

'The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Luke 1:28–33

In the Gospels, Jesus is often referred to as the Son of God, as in this passage from the Gospel of John:

'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.'

John 1:14

For many Christians there are many events or miracles from the life of Jesus which provide evidence that he was divine, such as:

- ▶ the miracle of the Virgin birth
- ▶ the voice of God was heard at the baptism of Jesus
- ▶ Jesus' ability to perform miracles
- ▶ the transfiguration of Jesus, when he was transformed in front of some of his apostles and shone with glorious light
- ▶ the resurrection of Jesus (see pages 181–82).



A painting of the Nativity scene

Blasphemy showing a lack of respect to God or other holy things.

Messiah or 'Anointed One', a title given to Jesus by the early Christians who believed Jesus' life had been foretold in the Old Testament.

Crucifixion

Jesus' teachings brought him into conflict with the Jewish authorities. The Jewish authorities viewed Jesus with suspicion and accused him of **blasphemy** because he claimed to be able to forgive sin. His followers believed he was the **Messiah** and this was seen as a challenge to the authorities, this led to his eventual arrest and execution. The Jewish authorities used the argument that in claiming to be the Messiah, Jesus was in fact claiming to be a king and this was treason.

The Roman form of execution was crucifixion. This was a common form of the death penalty used throughout the Roman Empire. Its purpose was to ensure a criminal died in agony and it was a powerful way to intimidate the civilian population. In the Gospel account Jesus is one of a number of men crucified in Jerusalem at the same time. However, an unusual feature in the account of Jesus' crucifixion is when the soldiers plait a crown of thorns and place it on Jesus' head.

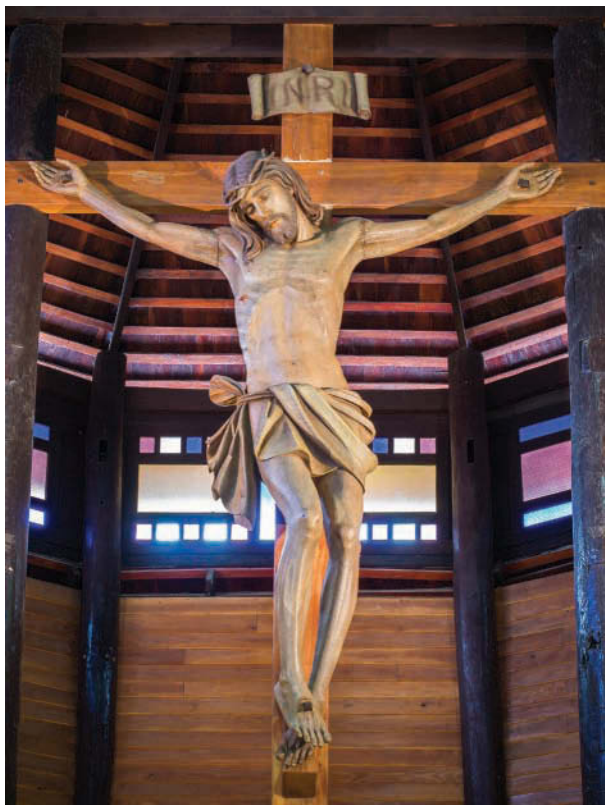
Because Christians believe Jesus was both truly God and truly human, they believe that when he died on the cross he suffered like any other human being. Jesus participates in the suffering of humanity and this is important to Christians because it means that God understands human suffering.

A summary of the main points of the crucifixion story are:

- ▶ Jesus is executed by the Romans.
- ▶ The soldiers mock Jesus and put a crown of thorns on him.
- ▶ He is crucified at a place called Golgotha.
- ▶ Two criminals are crucified with him.
- ▶ Jesus is mocked by people in the crowd.
- ▶ Jesus prays while on the cross.
- ▶ Jesus dies on the cross.

'From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").'

Matthew 27:45–46



A model of Jesus' crucifixion

Tasks

- 1 Read the full gospel account of Jesus' execution in Matthew 27:28–50
- 2 Create a timeline of events for the crucifixion of Jesus. Start with 'Jesus is sentenced to execution by the Romans' and finish with 'Jesus dies on the cross'.
- 3 Explain why the crucifixion of Jesus is important for Christians.

Salvation and atonement

Key Concept

Atonement The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

For Christians, Jesus' death on the cross is an act of **atonement**. The Fall, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, destroyed the perfect relationship between humans and God and introduced sin in to the world. Some Christians believe that because of this all people are born with sin, which they call 'original sin'. The sins which people commit in their daily lives take them further away from God.

Christians believe that God sent Jesus to earth to repair the broken relationship and that through his death Jesus paid the price, 'atoned', for human sin. This offers humankind salvation, which means they can live on for eternity with God in heaven after death.

Before Jesus, the Jews often used animal sacrifices to 'atone' or make up for the sins they had committed. This is shown in passages of the Old Testament.

'And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat; and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and send him away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. The goat shall bear all their iniquities upon him to a solitary land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness.'

Leviticus 16:20–22

However, Christians believe that the sacrifice Jesus made by dying on the cross meant he became the sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. Jesus became a 'sacrificial lamb' to take upon himself the sins of the world. His sacrifice meant that there was no longer any need to sacrifice animals as he paid the price for human sins once and for all.

The Last Supper

'While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Matthew 26:26–29

This passage from the Gospel of Matthew refers to the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples before his death. Jesus is celebrating the Jewish festival of the Passover with his disciples but he gives the shared meal a new significance. He tells the disciples that the bread they are eating represents his body and the wine they are drinking represents his blood.

He predicts his death on the cross and says that by sacrificing his body and blood, human sins will be forgiven. This quotation forms the basis of the Eucharist, in which Christians share bread and wine in worship today (see pages 201–2). The passage also contains the

Tasks

- 1 Explain why Jesus' life and death on Earth is so significant for Christians. Aim to include the following terms in your answer: The Fall, sin, atone, repair, broken relationship.
- 2 Give two reasons why Christians would identify the Last Supper as being an important event in the life of Jesus.

promise to Christians of eternal life in heaven. Christians believe that the suffering and death of Jesus was foretold by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament, who is writing about the Messiah or 'Chosen One' of God. For Christians, Jesus is the Messiah or the 'Christ'.

'He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.'

Isaiah 53:3–9

Tasks

- 1 Reproduce the table below, and complete by matching the prophecies from Isaiah with the life of Jesus.

Isaiah's Prophecies	Jesus' Life
"Despised and rejected by mankind."	The Roman Empire pursued and arrested Jesus.
"Was pierced for our transgressions."	
"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth."	
"He was lead like a lamb to the slaughter."	

- 2 Using the information from the table above, explain why Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah contained within Isaiah's prophecy. Ensure that you refer to 3 different reasons in your answer, using quotations if possible.

► Resurrection

Key Concept

Resurrection The belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.

For Christians, the **resurrection** of Jesus is fundamental to the Christian faith. It is when Jesus rose from the dead after his crucifixion. The belief that Jesus rose from the dead is the greatest miracle recorded in the New Testament and is evidence that Jesus was God.

The passage below says that if Christians don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus then their faith is pointless:

But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1 Corinthians 15:12–14

Task

Reproduce the table below, analysing the four key events in the life of Jesus. Complete it by giving a **definition** for each key term linked to the event, an **explanation** of what happened, an **outline** of why it is significant for Christians, and a **quote** linked to the event. (You will need plenty of space!)

Event	Definition	Explanation	Significance	Quote
Incarnation				
Crucifixion				
Salvation and atonement				
Resurrection				

The different Gospels disagree slightly on the exact events of the resurrection, but they agree that on the Sunday following Jesus' crucifixion, some of Jesus followers went to his tomb. They found that the stone covering the mouth of the tomb rolled away and Jesus' body was not inside.

The following passage outlines some of the events that happened after the resurrection:

Jesus appears to the eleven disciples.

Paul, an apostle, also claims Jesus has appeared to him.

Jesus appears to many other people.

'For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.'

1 Corinthians 15:3–8

Ascension

After Jesus rose from the dead there are few references in the Gospels to what Jesus did. He appeared to the disciples and groups of other people but the account is very short and vague. After a period of time the Gospels record that Jesus ascended (rose up) to his father in heaven. There are different understandings of what this actually means. Some Christians believe that Jesus physically ascended to heaven in a literal sense. Others believe that the description of Jesus physically rising up to heaven are just meant to be symbolic, showing that Jesus' time in human form on earth was over. For Christians, it is a very significant event. It marks an end to the presence of Jesus on earth in a physical way but includes an acceptance of Jesus' spirit at work in the world.

Jesus blessed his followers before ascending to heaven as described in this passage from the Gospel of Luke. Ministers of the Church will bless individuals and groups of Christians using Jesus' example:

'When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.'

Luke 24:50–53

It is important to understand that all of the accounts in the different Gospels record these significant events in the life of Jesus in very similar, but not identical, ways.

Tasks

- Which part of the Bible teaches us about the life of Jesus?
- Why do you think that the accounts of Jesus' life differ slightly within the Bible? Give two different suggestions.

■ Salvation

► Law

The Bible is the sacred text, or 'scripture', for Christians. It is made up of 66 'books' and was written by a number of authors over a

long period of time. The authors write in different styles, but all were inspired by their experience of God.

The Bible is split in to two sections: the Old Testament, written before Jesus' birth and the New Testament. The New Testament begins with the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life and death.

For all Christians the Bible is a book of revelation. This is because they believe that through the Bible, God is revealed and they can know more about him.

Christians also believe that the Bible is a record of divine Law – the rules and law of God by which Christians choose to live. So the Bible is a source of authority for all

Christians that they turn to for advice about how to live their lives. The teachings of the Bible and in particular the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life inspire Christians to live good lives. It has a major role in worship in all denominations. There is a reading from the Bible in every Christian service and many Christians read the Bible on a daily basis. However, there are different views on how biblical writings should be interpreted.

- Some Christians believe the Bible is the directly inspired 'Word of God' and they take all of the Bible content as literally true because it is a divine revelation. This means that when science seems to contradict some of stories that appear in the Bible, for example the Genesis creation story (see page 39), these Christians will believe the biblical account over the scientific one. For these Christians, it is the most important source of authority.
- Other Christians may take the view that the Bible is a book which requires interpretation. They believe that the Bible was written in a specific time and culture, and so some teachings may need to be adapted to apply in modern society.
- Some Christians take a more liberal view of the Bible, that is, they don't believe that all of the events it talks about actually happened, but that they are symbolic stories that show us how God would want us to live our lives.

Of course, Christians will draw on other sources of wisdom and authority to make life decisions. They may seek advice from a minister of religion or other Christians. A person may pray and ask for guidance. Some Christians will follow their conscience.

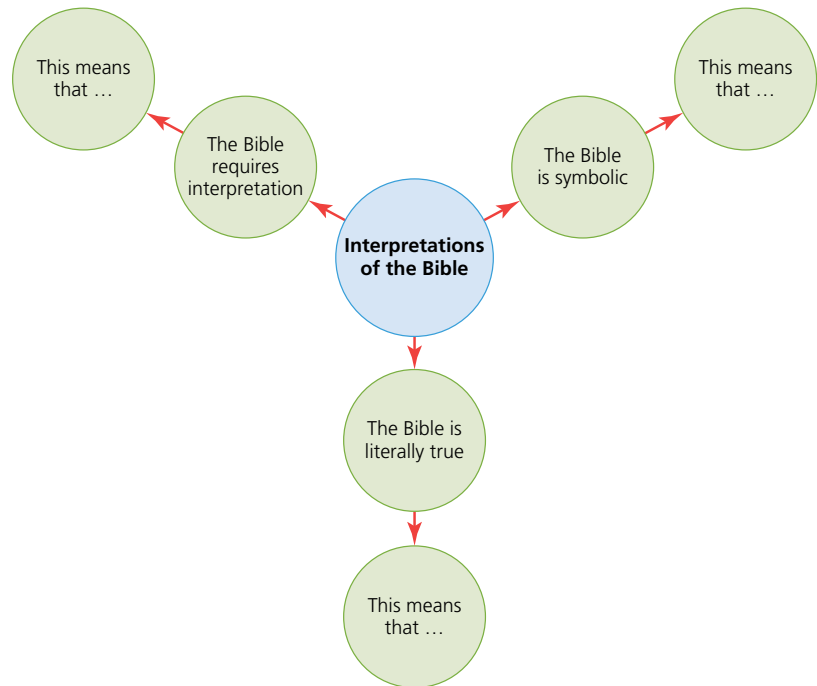


Christians have different beliefs about how the Bible should be interpreted. Does it need to be adapted to apply to modern society or is it the direct word of God that should always be followed?

Tasks



- 1 Explain what the Bible is in a short paragraph of roughly three sentences.
- 2 Copy and complete the mind map below, exploring the different ways in which the Bible is interpreted.



- 3 As a sentence, state what is meant by Divine Law.

Sin

A sin is an immoral act that goes against God's law. The Bible contains ideas about human sinfulness and its link with salvation.

Original sin

One idea is that Christians are born with Original sin – the tendency to disobey God. Original sin came into the world as a result of the Fall (see page 176) when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were sent out of the Garden of Eden. Adam's sin has been passed down from generation to generation. It is original sin that causes humans to do things in their lives that go against God's law and it is this sin that separates humans from God.

However, there are some problems with original sin. Many modern Christians object to traditional ideas about original sin since they believe it would be unfair for God to punish all humanity for an act committed by one man. Also, many Christians take a non-literal interpretation of the Bible and don't believe the events of the Fall actually happened. Even if it did happen as stated in the Bible, it's hard to explain biologically how original sin actually passed from one generation to the next.

Many modern Christians now understand original sin to be a useful way of understanding that humans are prone to doing bad things and acting in a way that is against God's law.

► Sin and salvation

Human sinfulness separates humans from God. However, Christians believe that Jesus' death on the cross atoned for human sin and allowed them the hope of salvation. It is the chance to live with God for eternity after death. There are different views on exactly how Jesus' death achieved this:

- That Jesus was a sacrifice that paid for human sin. Just as the Jews that had come before Jesus sacrificed an animal once a year to pay for their sins, Jesus' death did the same thing but once and for all.
- That Jesus paid the ransom for human sin, which released humans from captivity and allowed them to be saved.

► How do Christians achieve salvation?

Jesus' death allowed humans the chance of salvation, but different Christian denominations have different ideas about how they should act to receive that salvation.

Catholics believe that by taking part in the sacraments they will be able to achieve salvation and go to heaven. They believe that baptism washes them clean of sin, and that by confessing (the sacrament of penance) the sins they commit in their life they are absolved (or freed) from them.

Many Protestants believe that they must have faith in Jesus and repent their sins to achieve salvation.

► Grace and the spirit

In order to help them live a good life, Christians believe God sends the Holy Spirit to bring grace. This supernatural gift of grace means that Christians are able to pray for help from God, to turn away from sin and live good lives. This gift from God of the Holy Spirit is recorded in the Book of Acts, when the Holy Spirit appears to the disciples after Jesus' ascension to heaven:

'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.'

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.'

Acts 2:1–6

Many Christians believe in special 'rites' called sacraments (for example, baptism and the Eucharist, see page 198) and that the Holy Spirit comes down upon them as the sacraments are performed. All Christians believe the Holy Spirit is at work in the world today.

Tasks

- 1 How are Grace and The Holy Spirit linked?
- 2 Explain what happens during Evangelical worship and the role of the Holy Spirit within it. Use the structure below to help you:

Evangelical Christians encourage members of the congregation to be moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. This can take several forms. Firstly... Secondly... Finally...

The role of the Holy Spirit is particularly important in Evangelical worship. Evangelical Christians use a form of worship where worshippers are encouraged to be moved by the spirit. This means they believe the Holy Spirit is present and influences them in their prayers; they often shout out and praise God. Some Christians feel they are moved to speak in tongues, which they consider a gift from the Holy Spirit. Also, some Christians believe acts of 'faith healing' may take place within religious services, where the Holy Spirit works in miraculous way to heal people. This may be a physical or spiritual healing.

■ The afterlife

► Eschatological beliefs

Eschatology refers to beliefs about the 'last things': death, judgement, heaven and hell.

Christians believe in life after death. Indeed, this belief that there is life beyond death is at the very centre of Christianity. Christians believe that three days after Jesus was crucified and died, he rose from the dead and came back to life. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, summed up the importance of this to the Christian faith when he wrote:

'If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.'

Corinthians 1:15–17

There are a number of references in the New Testament concerning eschatological beliefs and the afterlife, and belief in an afterlife is stated in both the Apostles' Creed and the **Nicene Creed**. Christians believe this life is a preparation for an afterlife to be with God in heaven. The Nicene Creed ends with a reference to resurrection:

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

This explains why the story of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection is so important to Christians, because it provides them with evidence that death is not the end and although physical bodies die, the immortal souls live on. The cross is so important in Christianity because it is symbolic both of death and resurrection.

The Gospel of John

The Gospel of John was the last gospel to be written and is often referred to as the 'eschatological gospel'. In the gospel there are frequent references to the afterlife.

In one account, Jesus raises a man called Lazarus from the dead. When Jesus performs this miracle it is a sign of his power and it has a profound effect on the faith of the people who witness the miracle. Jesus says that anyone who believes in him will never die.

'Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"'

John 11:25–26

The **Nicene Creed** statement of Christian faith from 325 CE.

Tasks

- 1 What is 'eschatology'?
- 2 Where do Christians find the main references to eschatology in the Bible?



The cross is an important symbol for Christians because it represents Jesus' death and resurrection.

The words of Jesus in the following passage offer an insight into heaven and explain that the way to heaven is through faith in Jesus.

"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

John 14:2-7

► Judgement

Christians believe that there will be a Judgement Day when people will be judged by God for the quality of their lives. Christians believe that on this day Jesus will return to earth in a 'second coming'. This will mark the end of human existence on the earth. This belief is known as the 'Parousia'. The quotation below from Matthew describes how Jesus will separate the people who will go to heaven from those who will go to hell, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Jesus will separate those who are going to heaven from those who are going to hell, just like the shepherd in the parable separates the sheep from the goats.

He will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me."

Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.'

Matthew 25:31–46

Essentially Christians believe that the quality and goodness of our lives will be judged by God. The Apostles' Creed states quite explicitly that God 'shall come to judge the living and the dead'. People will be bodily resurrected on this day but they will be transformed into some glorified state. Illness, pain and death will no longer exist and the world will be purified of sin.

Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man

Parable a short, often simple story which contains a deeper meaning.

Jesus frequently used **parables** to explain a teaching. The parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man shows there is a clear divide between those who will be rewarded in heaven and those punished in hell, and the afterlife is only achieved by faith and good actions, regardless of success or wealth in an earthly life (see pages 155–56).

'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire."

But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

No, father Abraham, he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

Luke 16:19–31

Tasks

- 1 Summarise the parable of the Sheep and the Goats in no more than four sentences.
- 2 Explain what Christians learn about judgement and the afterlife from this parable.
- 3 In what ways are the messages or morals contained within the parables of the Sheep and the Goats and Lazarus and the Rich Man similar?



► Resurrection

Christians believe that the spiritual part of a person, their soul, is able to join God in heaven when they die. However, they believe that at the end of time there will also be a physical resurrection. This means that people will be brought back to life with physical bodies, just as Jesus was.

This belief is stated in the Creeds. Jesus himself did not teach a great deal about the nature of the afterlife but the teaching of Jesus and St Paul refers to a physical resurrection.

This quote from Corinthians describes that at the end of time a trumpet will sound and the dead will rise up.

'So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit." The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

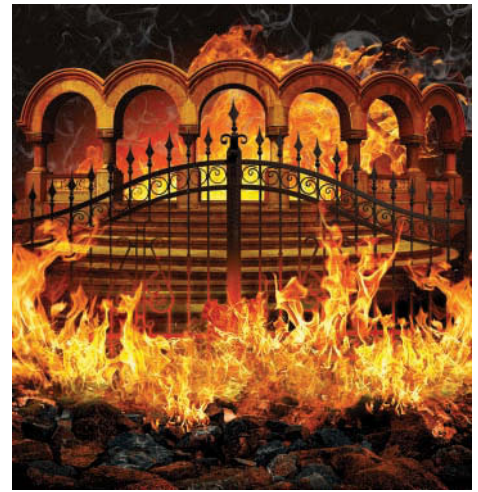
1 Corinthians 15:42–55

► Heaven and hell

Although there are numerous references in the Bible to heaven, there are not many descriptions of it, which explains why Christians believe different things about it. Most Christians believe that it is where people go in the afterlife if they have the right to go there and that is where God and angels are located.

However, Christians have different views on what it is: some believe that heaven is an actual, physical place whereas others believe it exists in a more spiritual dimension, more of a state or condition.

Christians have different opinions, too, about what hell is although most believe that, whatever it is, it is undoubtedly a place of suffering. Again some Christians believe that it is a physical place where people burn eternally; others believe that it exists in a more spiritual dimension. Most Christians believe that the real torment of hell resides in absolute separation from God as he is not present in hell. To be in hell is not to be in the presence of God.



The gates of heaven and hell

Traditional and contemporary beliefs about heaven and hell

Traditionally heaven and hell were thought of as real places. It was believed that hell was underground and heaven in the sky. Modern understandings of heaven and hell are more likely to see heaven as a place where God is and hell is a place where God is not.

Contemporary beliefs about heaven and hell raise important questions. If God is a God of love and a God of forgiveness then would God not ultimately forgive everyone, which means nobody goes to hell forever?

This is the sort of question modern Christian thinkers debate. In reality there is very little teaching about the nature of these places.

Both heaven and hell are connected to an idea of reward and punishment at the end of an earthly life and are an important basis for the Christian belief in an afterlife.

Purgatory

In addition to heaven and hell, Catholic Christians believe in purgatory. They believe that many people who die cannot gain immediate entry into heaven because they are stained by their sins. These people go to purgatory, a sort of waiting room for heaven, where they undergo a process of cleansing and purification before eventually securing entry to heaven. It is a temporary state of being. On Judgement Day all of those held in purgatory will go to heaven. Catholics believe it is important to pray for the souls of the dead and those in purgatory.

Tasks

- 1 Why do Christians have differing beliefs about hell?
- 2 Copy and complete the table below, exploring the different features of the afterlife in Christianity.

Place	Nature: permanent or temporary	Purpose	Description



End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Atonement
- Incarnation
- Omnibenevolent
- Omnipotent
- Resurrection
- Trinity

Key teachings about:

- the nature of God
- evil and suffering
- the creation
- the Trinity
- salvation
- the afterlife

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Christians believe about the nature of God.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain how Christians believe the incarnation and the resurrection are linked.

The Big Question

'The Bible needs to be adapted to suit the modern world.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **Creation**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently. All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote..... This means that/ Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they.....

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

Skills Link

- 1 State two Christian beliefs about God.
- 2 Explain why Christians believe Heaven is important.

► Exam Focus

Christianity: Beliefs and teachings

(b) questions

In these questions you will be expected to describe a particular religious teaching or view. There is a maximum of five marks for this type of question. To gain full marks you should be able to show your knowledge using appropriate religious terms and any relevant sources of wisdom or sacred texts.

Look at the following question:

(b) Explain Christian teaching about the crucifixion of Jesus. (5)

John has decided there are a number of different points he could include in his answer.

Select three and add any further details that could be included in his answer.

- The death of Jesus was part of a divine plan
- The death of Jesus was necessary to allow the resurrection to take place
- The crucifixion of Jesus was an act of atonement for the sins of people
- The crucifixion is part of the process for the redemption/salvation of humanity
- The crucifixion was a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- Reference to biblical texts, such as Luke 18:31–33

(d) questions

(d) 'Jesus was just an ordinary man.'

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. (15)

(You must refer to religion and belief in your answer.)

In (d) questions, different points of views are needed. These do not have to be contrasting views but must be different. Look at the list below: there are only three different point of view. The other points are just repeats. Identify the three different views.

- Christians believe Jesus was the Son of God
- Although Jesus might not have been divine he gave some good teachings
- Christians believe God had one son called Jesus
- Some people believe Jesus was simply an ordinary man who preached a particular ethical code
- If Jesus was ordinary lots of people wouldn't worship him
- Jesus is important because his teachings are for everyone, whether they are Christians or not
- The importance of Jesus is shown by the many Christians who believe in him.

6

Christianity: Practices

■ Forms of worship

Worship is an expression of adoration and praise for God. Acts of worship and their importance are referred to frequently in the Bible. For example, in the Ten Commandments the commandment ‘to keep holy the Sabbath day’ has been interpreted as a command to worship God.

There are many different forms of worship and different Christian traditions have different ways of worshipping God. Different forms of worship include:

- ▶ **Liturgical worship** is when worship follows a very set structure which is more or less the same every time. An example of this is the Eucharist service (see page 201).
- ▶ **Informal worship** refers to worship that doesn’t have a set structure and is more spontaneous than liturgical worship. Services in Evangelical denominations are often more informal than traditional worship.
- ▶ **Individual worship** takes place in addition to worshipping together in a church. Christians believe that it is important to form a personal relationship with God and worshipping alone is often part of this.

Set and informal prayers are an important part of all forms of Christian worship. These will be examined on page 193.

Not all worship however involves praying or listening to sermons. For some denominations, like the Salvation Army, music has become central to their worship and congregational singing of hymns plays an enormously significant part in their services.



When Christians come together to worship this is known as a congregation. Worship that takes place as a congregation is sometimes called ‘corporate worship’.

'Where two or more are gathered
in my name, I am there with them'

Matthew 18:20



The Eucharist service is an example of liturgical worship

Liturgical worship

Liturgical worship is a form of worship which follows a set pattern and has established rituals as part of public church worship. This might be a set pattern of prayers, or the use of a set service book as in the Church of England.

In the Church of England, liturgical worship is rooted in Thomas Cranmer's *Exhortation and Litany* of 1554. It was the first 'service book' written in English and outlined how church services should take place. Most denominations include the Lord's prayer (see page 196) in their services, which, because of its biblical origins, has real significance for all Protestant denominations.

Most Christian churches have some form of liturgical worship. A good example of liturgical worship is the Eucharist, which is also known as Holy Communion or Mass. In the Catholic Church for example, the Eucharistic service would contain:

- ▶ the Liturgy of the Word: this consists of readings from the Bible, a homily (sermon), a public profession of faith (for reciting the Apostles' or Nicene Creed, see page 173) and prayers of intercession (prayers for those in need)
- ▶ the Liturgy of the Eucharist: in this part of the service the altar is prepared with the bread and wine. The Eucharistic prayer and Lord's Prayer are said and people then share in the bread and wine. The service ends with prayers and a blessing from the priest.

Informal worship

Some Churches have moved away from liturgical worship to adopt a more informal approach which does not have a set structure. In some denominations where informal worship is more common, it would be quite hard to identify any set structure or 'liturgy' at all. The modern charismatic and evangelical approach to worship has distanced itself from traditional Protestant rituals. They emphasise the importance of the Holy Spirit and spontaneous action, and this shows itself in services, in worship and in prayer. Although this informal worship may seem modern, it does in fact resemble the type of worship offered by Christians in the first decades of the Church before rituals and tradition had been established.

Some Christian movements have moved away from the church building being the place in which all worship should take place. Instead they emphasise the ability to worship in any place where Christians gather. Again this is similar to worship in the early Church.

Individual worship

Many Christians believe that a personal relationship with God is possible and important, so individual worship is important to them. Traditionally worship tended to be seen as a formal process that should take place when Christians gathered together (in 'congregations') at set times in set places (chapels and churches). This is known as 'corporate worship' and, indeed, this corporate gathering of Christians is what actually makes up a Church.

However, as society has changed over the centuries, and given more responsibilities and freedoms to the individual, so the idea of private worship has gained ground. There are many people today

'Go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is in Heaven'

Matthew 6:6

who declare themselves to be Christians, with a personal relationship with God, although they seldom go to church or take part in public worship. They pray alone or with their families but do not gather with others in a Church. The Bible instructs Christians to do both.

Attendance at Church of England services declined to its lowest ever level in 2016 and so the continued debate about the roles of individual and public worship is likely to become more important, not least because it has enormous implications for the use and sustainability of church buildings.

▶ The nature and importance of prayer

Prayer was at the heart of Jesus' lifestyle. Christians believe it is an essential part of their faith.

In John 4:23 Jesus says:

'Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.'

Jesus states that Christians should worship God in the Spirit and in truth. Christians believe that this means worship should not be superficial, but that they should worship God with all of their thoughts, actions and words.

Worship involves prayer and prayer is about developing a special relationship with God. Prayer serves a number of purposes and is found in many different forms within different Christian denominations. Some of the most important types of prayer are:

- ▶ Adoration – deep love and respect for God
- ▶ Confessional – statement of faith through prayer
- ▶ Contemplation – meditation
- ▶ Penitential – saying sorry
- ▶ Praise – giving praise, which might include singing hymns
- ▶ Thanksgiving – saying thank you
- ▶ Supplication – asking for something.

Most people are familiar with the idea of someone sitting or kneeling alone in a church, deep in their own thoughts and surrounded by silence. Perhaps many more people, including those without faith, are familiar with how, in times of great adversity, people say a silent prayer, often out of a sense of desperation. All of these people in their own ways are talking to God, and prayer, quite simply, is how Christians communicate with God. For some there is a real sense of talking to God, whereas for others the means of communication is more mysterious. Certainly Jesus taught the early disciples to pray, encouraging them to pray to God as a father and this suggests that prayer is something to be learnt.

For Protestants, the importance of individual prayer cannot be underestimated. One of the great principles of the Reformation, which led to the creation of Protestantism, was a belief that each Christian is in their own way a priest. This means that Protestants believe that all Christians have direct access to God through Christ; they don't have to go through a priest.

Prayer is a significant factor in making faith deeply personal. Many people pray alone but many people find tremendous spiritual support from praying together, believing that they are following the instructions of Christ himself, who encouraged his followers to pray together.



For some Christians prayer is a direct way of having a conversation with God.

Our Father,

*who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done.
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
And the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen*

Source: From the Book of Common Prayer

The Lord's Prayer is the most important Christian prayer. It is the words of Jesus given directly to the disciples when they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Set prayers

Set prayers are one form of praying. They allow Christians to learn and repeat prayers that have a significant meaning for them. They allow prayer to become collective so when Christians recite the Lord's Prayer with others their single voices become a communal voice.

One example is the Lord's prayer, which is recited in almost every Christian service. Jesus instructed the disciples to pray by using the Lord's prayer in response to the disciples asking Jesus to teach them how to pray.

Like the disciples, many people find set prayers very useful. They are part of the tradition and ritual of worship that goes back hundreds of years.

Set prayers were originally passed on by word of mouth before being written down so that they could be repeated and used by more than one person.

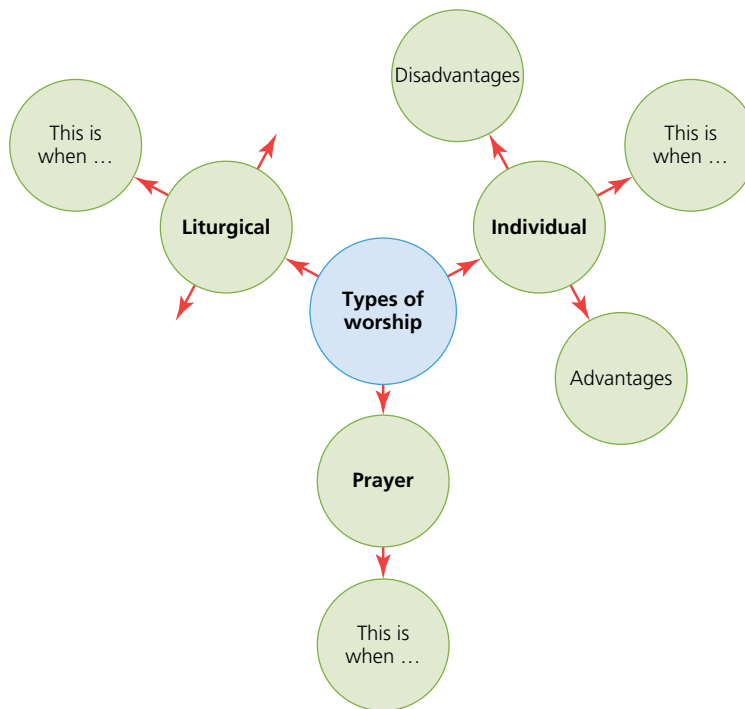
Many Protestant denominations in Britain use the set prayers in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Tasks

- 1 State what is meant by worship.
- 2 Reproduce the table below. Complete the table by defining each different type of prayer.

Adoration	Confessional	Contemplation	Penitential	Praise	Thanksgiving	Supplication

- 3 Reproduce the diagram below, analysing the different types of worship. For each, give a definition/description, and suggest the advantage and disadvantages.



- 4 Why is the Lord's Prayer so important for Christians?
- 5 Read the Lord's prayer above. Explain, using quotes if necessary, three different things that it tells Christians about God.

Extemporaneous prayers

Extemporaneous prayers are non-formulaic, spontaneous prayers. Some Christians prefer these types of prayers because they believe that their spontaneity in some ways is more spiritually honest. Some Christians believe that when they pray in this way their choice and use of words are influenced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Some Christian denominations have gone so far as to reject set prayers other than the Lord's Prayer. They believe that by repeating set prayers, the real meaning is lost and people just end up repeating them without thinking carefully about the meaning.

Informal prayers

Set prayers are written in a particular style of English, namely formal, standard English. For example, God is referred to as a 'father' rather than a 'dad'. For some Christians this very formal language means they feel they can't really relate to the set prayers and so they have adopted an informal voice in their prayers, speaking to God in more day-to-day language.

► How Quakers worship

Informal prayer tends to be private and involves more than just communicating with God. It can include meditation, contemplation, personal reflection and simply being in the presence of God. Quakers (the Society of Friends), for example, value this idea of simply being in the presence of God.

Quaker 'services' do not consist of any set prayers. Instead they sit in silence and stillness. They believe that this allows them the opportunity to listen and reflect. This helps them to become closer to God and to the other members of the congregation. There is no official leader of the worship, but occasionally someone might feel moved to speak, this is called ministry. Others may listen in silence or feel they want to speak too.

► Evangelical worship

In many Evangelical Churches, such as the Pentecostal Church, worship is also very informal. These Christians feel they are moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. This may involve them falling into trances or even speaking in unknown languages (speaking in tongues). Movement and participation is encouraged and there is often music, singing and dancing in the congregation.

The sacraments

Key Concepts

Sacraments An outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God, for example baptism and Eucharist.

Rite a ritual or series of ritual practices which often have symbolic meaning.

The word **sacrament** originates from the Latin 'sacramentum', an oath of allegiance made by Roman soldiers in a ceremony conducted in a holy place. By the second century CE it had started to be used to describe Christian **rites**. By the fifth century it was defined by the early Christian thinker St Augustine in his writings as a 'visible sign of invisible grace'. This means that the actions, words and objects involved in each sacrament are a sign that Christians are receiving God's grace or blessing.

By the twelfth century it was used to describe seven specific rites that were seen as central to Christian life. These sacraments are still acknowledged by the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. They are:

- ▶ Baptism (see page 199): initiates people into the Christian church. Catholics believe that it washes away sin. Many churches practice infant baptism, though some only allow adults to be baptised. The belief is that as an adult they can understand the commitment they are making.
- ▶ Confirmation: in churches that practice infant baptism, confirmation takes place when a person reaches an age when they commit to the church for themselves. They remake the promises that were made by their parents or guardians on their behalf at their baptism.
- ▶ Eucharist (see page 201): in the Eucharist service worshippers share bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus' death.
- ▶ Penance: also known as the sacrament of reconciliation or confession. Catholics are required to confess their sins to a priest and repent them. The priest will then 'absolve' (or free) them from their sins and ask them to carry out a penitent act to show they are sorry for what they have done. This might include praying or fasting.
- ▶ Anointing of the sick: this sacrament is performed when a Catholic is seriously ill or dying. It is carried out by a priest who will apply oil to ('anoint') the sick person.
- ▶ Holy orders: the sacrament of Holy orders is the way people join the priesthood of the church. Joining the priesthood is called being 'ordained'.
- ▶ Marriage: (see page 7) the sacrament of marriage shows the spiritual union of the couple and God.



Most Protestants only recognise two sacraments: baptism and the Eucharist (or Holy Communion). This is because these were the only two sacraments documented in the Gospels as being practised by Jesus during his life.

Some Christian denominations, such as the Quakers (the Society of Friends) and the Salvation Army, don't even believe in these two sacraments. They both believe that sacraments are an inward spiritual experience and that there is no need for external services or rituals. They believe that some people might get so caught up in the external rituals that they forget the important inward grace they receive from God. These churches believe that it is possible to live a holy life without the need of the sacraments.

Many Evangelical Christian churches carry out rituals like baptism, but don't believe they are especially sacred so don't consider them sacraments.

▶ The role, meaning and celebration of baptism

What happens at a baptism?

Lay person a person who is not a member of the clergy.

Christians believe that the rite of baptism must be carried out by an ordained minister or an authorised **lay person**, but different denominations have different practices. In most Christian Churches, including the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, children and infants are baptised, celebrating the birth of a child and marking their entry into the Christian community.

Parents and godparents of a baby make promises to bring them up in the Christian faith. For denominations that practise infant baptism, children will often have a 'confirmation' ceremony when they reach their early teens or as adults when they are able to declare their own faith and remake the promises their parents and godparents made on their behalf at baptism.

Some denominations, for example Baptists, don't believe in infant baptism because they think that a believer should be able to declare their own faith, and obviously babies cannot do this. As a result, babies and children are not baptised because this type of 'believers' baptism' is for only for those who are able to state

their faith. Indeed, Jesus himself was baptised as an adult. Some denominations, and certainly many Evangelical Christians, fully immerse the person being baptised in water.



An adult being baptised



The rite of baptism involves the use of water. The word 'baptism' stems from the Greek word 'bapto' which means to dip in water. The water used to baptise can be poured over the head or a few symbolic drops can be sprinkled on the head.

Why do Christians believe baptism is important?

Christians believe that baptism is important because:

- ▶ it is a rite of entry that allows people to become members of the Christian Church
- ▶ many Christians believe original sin is removed through the action of baptism
- ▶ it follows the personal example of Jesus who was baptised as an adult by John the Baptist
- ▶ believers' baptism gives an individual an opportunity to publicly proclaim their personal faith.

It is thought of as the first sacrament, acting as a 'covenant' or agreement between human beings and God.

Christians believe very strongly in the importance of baptism and there are a number of important references to it in the Bible. St Paul suggests that baptism links us directly with the death and resurrection of Jesus when he states:

'We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.'

Epistle to the Romans 6:4

Jesus himself was baptised. He gives the disciples a clear instruction to baptise people:

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

Matthew 28:19–20

In Christianity, baptism is regarded as a sign of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The baptised Christian becomes united with Christ, including in his death and resurrection. Through being baptised they are able to enter heaven and live eternally with God after death, as this quote from John shows:

'Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

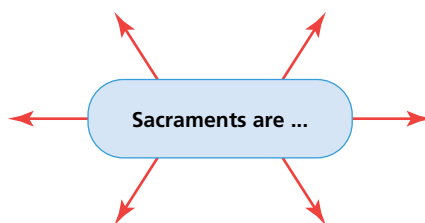
"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

John 3:3–6

Tasks

- 1 Complete the diagram below, explaining what sacraments are and giving examples of the different sacraments of the Church.



- 2 Explain why baptism is important to Christians. Make reference to at least one quote in your answer.
- 3 Write the sub-heading: **Key features of an Infant Baptism**. Underneath, write down the main parts of the baptismal ceremony as bullet points.
- 4 Why do some denominations disagree with infant baptism?

► The Eucharist



The bread and wine shared during the Eucharist service are representative of Jesus' body and blood.

Many Christians believe that the Eucharist (also known as Mass or Holy Communion) is a sacrament instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper, the final meal that he shared with his disciples before the crucifixion. At this meal Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples and told them that the wine represented his blood and the bread represented his body. He told them that they should share bread and wine when they gathered together after his death in his memory.

Christians today continue this tradition – taking bread and wine when they meet to worship in a sacrament that they call Eucharist. They believe this brings them closer to God. The word 'Eucharist' is a Greek word, meaning thanksgiving, and in one sense it is an act of thanksgiving for the life and death of Jesus and for the Christian faith.

Eucharist services are examples of liturgical worship, which means they have a set structure and the same rituals happen each time. The outline of a typical Catholic service is described on page 194.

Different views about the Eucharist

Different denominations have different views about what happens in Eucharistic services:

Lutheranism a Protestant denomination that follows the religious doctrines of Martin Luther (1483–1586).

- ▶ Catholics believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ in a process called transubstantiation. In the sixteenth century, Protestant Reformers the **Lutherans** adopted a position called consubstantiation. This is concept of 'sacramental union', that the body and blood of Jesus are somehow present 'in, with and under' the forms of bread and wine. This has been explained by using the analogy of an iron rod placed in fire. Both fire and metal are united within the red-hot iron and yet the fire and the metal retain their distinctiveness as well.
- ▶ Many Protestants reject the view of the Catholic Church and its belief in transubstantiation. They do not believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ. The Reformed and Presbyterian view of the Eucharist is that Christ is present spiritually rather than literally in the bread and wine.
- ▶ Other Protestants, such as Baptists, believe that Christ is not present in the bread and wine but that the ritual is simply an act of remembrance. This is known as memorialism.

Whatever the Christian view, the fact that the ritual revolves around bread and wine is important. Food and drink are intrinsic to human physical health and survival in the same way that Christians believe this sacrament is important to spiritual health and survival.

Tasks

- 1 What is the Eucharist?
- 2 Reproduce the table below. Complete it by outlining the differing views about the Eucharist.

Denomination	View
Catholic	
Lutheran	
Protestant	
Baptist	

■ Pilgrimage and celebrations

► Celebrations

Christian celebrations are religious festivals which remember important events in the life of Jesus or mark important events in the history of the Christian Church. Because Britain is traditionally a Christian country the major celebrations or festivals became the basis of public holidays in Britain. The two most important Christian celebrations are Christmas and Easter.

► Christmas

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ – the incarnation. Christians do not believe Jesus was actually born on Christmas day but mark this day in the Christian calendar to focus on the incarnation.

Because the celebration is so important, a period of time known as Advent was set aside to allow Christians to prepare for Christmas. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas day. Traditionally many Christians fasted during Advent, and the Eastern Orthodox Church still practises fasting, though the Western Churches no longer do. Many people have advent calendars or advent candles to count down the days until Christmas.

In the run up to Christmas Christians may celebrate in a number of ways:

Nativity the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew.

- **Nativity** or crib scenes are very common in homes and churches.
- Nativity plays are acted out in schools and churches.
- Special Christingle services take place in church where children traditionally make a Christingle (orange with a candle) to show Jesus was the 'light of the world'.



A card portraying the Nativity scene

- Carol concerts where people sing Christmas carols
- Exchanging Christmas cards with a religious image and greeting
- Decoration of houses inside and outside
- Advent wreath decorations
- Midnight Mass communion service takes place on Christmas Eve

On Christmas day itself Christians may attend Church services as well as having family meals and exchanging gifts. Christmas is also celebrated

by many non-Christians in the UK and, for these people, holds no particular religious significance. School nativity plays become winter concerts and the design of many Christmas cards show only the fun or wintry aspects of this time. Many people regard it as a 'wintertime' festival rather than a religious one.

► Easter

Easter is the most important festival in the Christian calendar. It remembers the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Lent

A period of 40 days, known as 'Lent' leads up to Easter. Lent remembers the time Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying. The devil tried to tempt him several times during this period but he resisted the temptations.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday when there are special church services. Catholics, for example, attend a special service where they are marked with black ashes in the shape of a cross on their foreheads. Traditionally Ash Wednesday is a day of abstinence and fasting. To mark the fact that Jesus fasted in the desert, Christians often give up something for Lent. The day before Lent starts is known as Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day and was an opportunity to use up the foods that Christians would be giving up during Lent.

Holy week

Holy week is the week that precedes Easter Sunday, and it is when Christians remember the events in Jesus' life that led up to his death:

- **Palm Sunday:** Palm Sunday commemorates the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem. In some Christian traditions, for example Anglicanism and Catholicism, Christians receive crosses made of palm leaves to remind them of this event.
- **Maundy Thursday:** The Thursday before Easter remembers Jesus' last meal with his disciples. During the meal they shared bread and wine, which Jesus told them represented his body and blood. To commemorate this, Christians often have Holy Communion services (Mass). Jesus also washed his disciples' feet and in Catholic churches the priest will often wash the feet of some members of the congregation.
- **Good Friday:** On Good Friday Christians remember Jesus' death on the cross. It is a day of mourning and services will be held. Some Christians, for example Catholics, fast on this day. In some countries there will be processions or re-enactments of the death of Jesus.

Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday marks the day of Jesus' resurrection, when those coming to his tomb found it empty. It is the most important day in the Christian calendar and is a day of celebration. Christians attend special services and churches are filled with flowers.

As well as attending church, Christians may also celebrate Easter in the following ways:

- exchanging cards with family and friends
- exchanging Easter eggs
- attending church services in Lent
- visiting cemeteries to leave flowers for deceased family and friends
- personal reading of the Bible
- evening vigil on the Saturday of Holy Week.



Some Christians paint eggs during Easter to commemorate Jesus' resurrection

Task

Reproduce the table below. Complete by analysing each of the major celebrations, outlining their significance, what they involve, and how they are traditionally celebrated.

Celebration	Significance	Involves . . .	Celebrated by . . .
Christmas	Marks the birth of Jesus	Advent – a time of preparation for Christmas	Nativity plays, carol concerts, . . .
Lent			
Holy Week		Palm Sunday . . .	
Good Friday			
Easter Sunday			

► Pilgrimages

A pilgrimage is a journey to a sacred place, usually as an act of religious devotion.

Pilgrimage has always been a practice in the Christian religion where many pilgrims have travelled to the Holy Land to ‘walk in the footsteps of Jesus’. Today pilgrimage is still practised by many Christians worldwide. You need to study two sites of pilgrimage in particular: Walsingham in Britain and Taizé in France.

The reasons why people travel on a pilgrimage are many and complex and they have changed over time. Certainly, a modern-day pilgrim does not face the dangers faced by a medieval pilgrim. However, all pilgrims believe that life itself is a journey towards God. And a pilgrimage is faith in action, the journey representing the journey that all Christians undertake from earth to heaven.



Walsingham became a shrine to which pilgrims would travel

Walsingham as a Christian place of pilgrimage

Walsingham is in the county of Norfolk, 30 miles from Norwich, in England. It has been a holy place since 1061 when the widow of the Lord of the Manor of Walsingham Pava, Richeldis de Faverches,

Reformation when Henry VIII split with the Catholic Church and established the Church of England. He destroyed many of the monasteries in Britain.

Ecumenical representing or promoting unity within the different Christian Churches.

had a dream in which the Virgin Mary asked her to build a replica of the house in Nazareth where the announcement of the birth of Jesus took place. This she did and then, around about 1150, a priory or small monastic church was built on the site.

From this time onwards Walsingham became a shrine to which medieval pilgrims would travel from all around the world – until 1538 when the **Reformation** resulted in its destruction. People probably continued to travel in secret to this holy place but it was only in 1829, after the laws to allow Catholics to practise their religion fully in Britain, that people were able to travel openly to Walsingham again. Today there is also an Anglican shrine at Walsingham.

Walsingham is an important place of pilgrimage because our human journey begins with birth and what could be more special than the place where the announcement of the birth of Jesus took place?

Taizé as a Christian place of pilgrimage

What is the Taizé community?

Taizé is a Christian site of pilgrimage in Burgundy in France. It was founded in 1940 by Roger Schutz and is an important **ecumenical** monastic order. The monks come from many different countries and live a life of communal prayer.

The men who become monks at Taizé are from different Christian denominations. This is unusual and is what makes it an ‘ecumenical’ monastic community. Today there more than one hundred ‘brothers’, from both Catholic and Protestant Christian traditions. Reconciliation, the resolution of conflict, is at the heart of the Taizé community. By bringing together different Christian denominations the Taizé community promotes understanding and cooperation between them.



A Taizé service

Why is Taizé famous?

The community today has become one of the world’s most important sites of Christian pilgrimage for young people. It is estimated that over 100,000 young people make pilgrimages to Taizé each year.

The reason so many young people go on pilgrimage to Taizé a year may include:

- ▶ curiosity
- ▶ adventure
- ▶ holiday
- ▶ act of religious devotion
- ▶ an attempt to walk in the footsteps of people of faith
- ▶ historical reasons
- ▶ act of atonement
- ▶ act of supplication to ask God for something.

When the pilgrims arrive they join in the life of the monastic community by participating in the set times of prayer in the 'Church of Reconciliation'. They also spend time in private prayer, attend Bible-study discussion groups led by the monks and share in the communal work.

The services are world famous for the use of chants and music, and Taizé chants have become popular in many churches. During the church services the monks wear white robes and all of the pilgrims who visit Taizé are required to attend the monastic church services three times each day.

Tasks

- 1 What is pilgrimage?
- 2 Explain two reasons why a Christian might choose to go on a pilgrimage.
- 3 Reproduce the table below. Complete it by analysing each place of pilgrimage, outlining the location, history, significance, and why Christians go.

Place of Pilgrimage	Location	History	Significance	Why Christians go
Taizé				
Walsingham				

■ Christianity in Britain and the role of the Church in the local community

► The changing religious landscape in twenty-first-century Britain

Atheist believing there is no God.
Agnostic unsure whether there is a God.

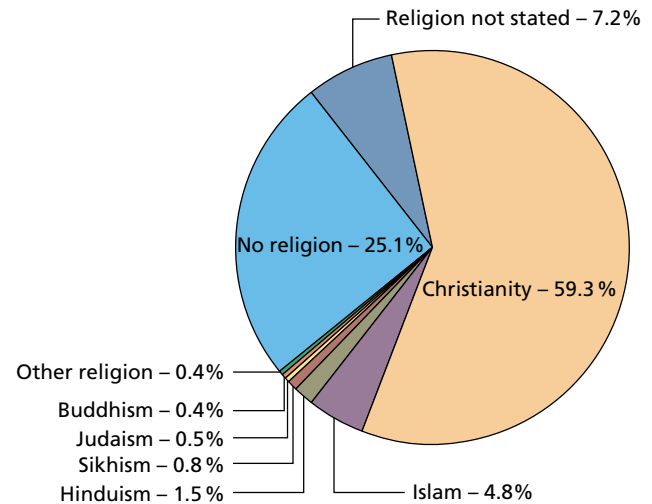
The Christian Church faces many challenges in twenty-first-century Britain. Increasingly many of the religious beliefs and teachings are regarded as either out of date or irrelevant. In Britain today many more people claim to be either **atheist** or **agnostic**. Also, Christianity is now only one of many religious traditions followed by people in Britain. This means the religious landscape is pluralist with people following a number of religions.

Attendance at Christian places of worship has declined and the celebrations of religious festivals for many have lost their religious significance. One example of this is the celebration of Christmas. Many people regard this simply as an important time to spend with family and friends and an opportunity to share a feeling of good will to others. Cards and presents are exchanged without any religious connection. It is celebrated without a Christian reference and much more as a secular celebration.

Life in twenty-first-century Britain

The results of the last government census poll in 2011 showed a changing religious landscape in Britain. Despite falling numbers, Christianity remained the largest religion in England and Wales. Muslims were the next biggest religious group and have grown in the last decade. Meanwhile the proportion of the population who reported they have no religion reached a quarter.

- In the 2011 census, Christianity was the largest religion, with 33.2 million people (59.3 per cent of the population). The second largest religious group were Muslims with 2.7 million people (4.8 per cent of the population).
- 14.1 million people, around a quarter of the population in England and Wales, reported they had no religion in 2011.
- The religion question was the only voluntary question on the 2011 census and 7.2 per cent of people did not answer the question.
- Between 2001 and 2011 there was a decrease in the numbers of people who identify as Christian (from 71.7 per cent to 59.3 per cent) and an increase in those reporting no religion (from 14.8 per cent to 25.1 per cent). There were increases in the other main religious group categories, with the number of Muslims increasing the most (from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent).
- In 2011, London was the most diverse region with the highest proportion of people identifying themselves as Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish. The North East and North West had the highest proportion of Christians and Wales had the highest proportion of people reporting no religion.



■ Summary from Office for National statistics, 2012

Task

- 1 Copy and complete the table below. For each key word, define the meaning of the term and summarise it in no more than three words.

Key term	Definition	Summary in three words or less:
Denomination		
Pluralist	When a number of different religions are followed side by side in society.	
Atheist		
Agnostic		
Martyred		Dying for beliefs
Secular		Non-religious society

- 2 Read the 'Life in twenty-first-century Britain' box on the previous page. In one paragraph, summarise what it tells us about religion in modern Britain. Each time you make a point support it with evidence or statistics from the census report.
- 3 What do you think these statistics are telling us about the future of religion in modern Britain? Think about the overall trend that the statistics show.
- 4 Give one reason why people might say that they belong to a religion but do not regularly attend a place of worship.
- 5 Why do you think church attendance in Britain has declined? Give three different suggestions.

► UK laws, festivals and traditions

Christianity was introduced to the UK by the Romans almost two thousand years ago. This long history means that it is deeply embedded in many of the laws, festivals and traditions of the UK. The Church of England is the 'established' religion of England. This means that it has links to the government and other official bodies such as the judiciary (the court system).

In the sixteenth century King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope and made himself head of the Church of England. Today as well as being Head of State, the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. All monarchs are crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Traditions

Many of our customs and ways of life have their foundation in Christianity, for example:

- 'Keep holy the Sabbath day' is a Commandment. Traditionally Christians go to church on a Sunday and it was regarded as a 'day of rest'. As a result the hours shops can trade on a Sunday are restricted.
- In a UK court of law witnesses giving evidence are asked to swear they are telling the truth. They often do this on the Bible, although if they are from a different religious tradition they can swear on their own holy book or if they are non-religious they can make a 'witness affirmation' where they promise to tell the truth without reference to a holy book.
- Christian hymns and readings are often made at public events, for example the National Service of Remembrance held each year to commemorate those who died in the Second World War.
- Lots of people in the UK mark important life events, like marriage in a church, even if they are not religious.

Tasks

- 1 Describe the way in which the church and the state are linked in Britain.
- 2 Outline the impact of the relationship between the church and the state on public life.
- 3 Explain whether you believe that there should be this kind of link in modern British society.

Laws

The UK parliament is the body that makes all UK laws by passing Acts of Parliament. It is made up of two 'houses'. The House of Commons is made up of elected representatives, MPs. The House of Lords is not elected and its members are of two types. Lords Temporal are appointed by the monarch, but the Lords Spiritual are 26 of the most senior Church of England Bishops. For laws to be passed they must be approved by both houses of parliament. So the Church of England has a direct role in shaping UK law. Meetings of both houses of parliament open with Christian prayers and indeed, many of the laws of the UK reflect the teaching of some of the Ten Commandments, such as 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal'.

Festivals

The Christian calendar influences UK public holidays. The two major Christian festivals, Christmas (see page 203) and Easter (page 204) are still widely celebrated in the UK. School holidays fall over these periods and many businesses will close. Other Christian festivals such as St. Valentine's Day are also celebrated, though for most people the religious context of the day is no longer important and it has become a more 'secular' festival, celebrating romantic love.

As the 2011 census results (page 208) show, the UK is a place where many religions are practised. Today people of other religious traditions may take time off school or work to celebrate their own festivals. For example, the biggest celebration of the Muslim festival Eid al-Fitr happens in Small Heath Park in Birmingham, where 75,000 people gather to celebrate the end of fasting during the month of Ramadan (see page 257). There are games, entertainment and food stalls and people of all religious traditions (and none) are welcome to come and celebrate.

There are also many other festivals celebrated in the UK. Bonfire Night for example remembers the Gunpowder Plot when plotters led by Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up Parliament. Some non-religious festivals, for example the Notting Hill Carnival that happens each summer in London, celebrate the diversity of modern Britain with no specific focus on religion.

Non-religious groups such as humanists might recognise World Humanist Day (in June) or Human Rights day (in December) but these are not widely celebrated in the UK.

Task

- 1 Should the State fund schools with a religious character?
- 2 Should religious education be compulsory in state schools?



The role of religion in education

Today, about one third of state-funded schools in England and Wales are faith schools. This means that, although their income comes from public funds, these schools have a 'religious character'.

Of the 7,000 faith primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, ninety-eight per cent have a Christian character. 68 per cent are Church of England schools and 30 per cent are Catholic.

All pupils must, by law, be taught religious education and all schools should provide a daily act of worship. Religious education should reflect the fact that the traditions of the UK are, in the main, Christian. For state schools without a religious charter, more than half of the acts of worship should be Christian.

However, many schools celebrate a variety of religious traditions throughout the school year.

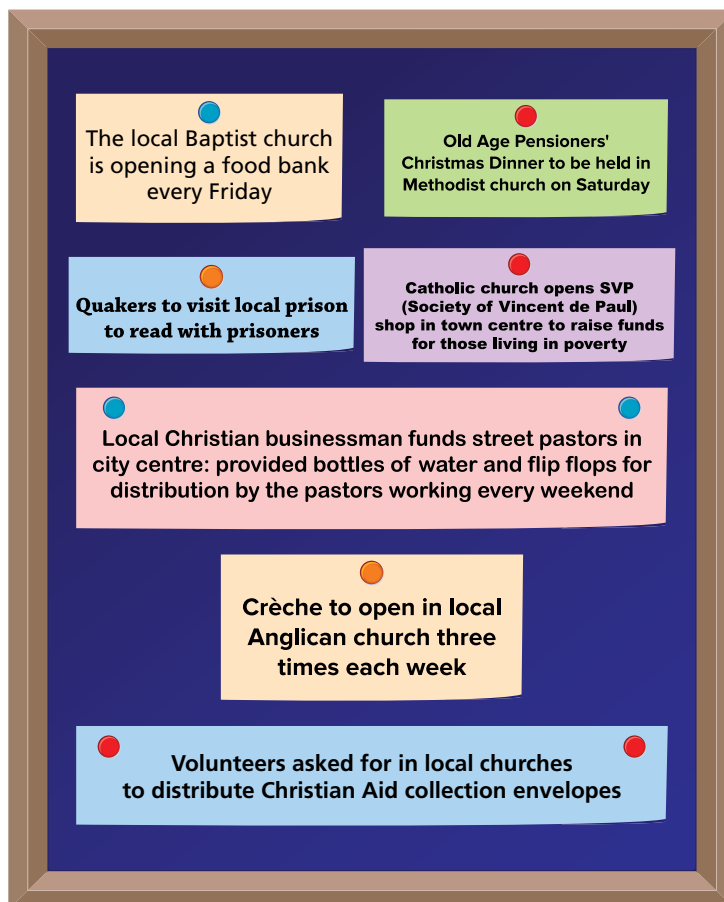
▶ The role of the church in the local community

Primarily a church is a place of worship, but as part of living out the values Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels churches reach out into communities in a variety of ways.

Some of the services the Church provides to the community might be religious in nature, for example marking important rites of passage for individuals and families. Services such as baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals will be held in the church.

Lots of churches have an attached 'church hall' and this may be used for a variety of activities, including:

- ▶ refreshments after Sunday service
- ▶ a weekly meal for the homeless provided by money donated by a congregation
- ▶ food banks
- ▶ coffee mornings for the elderly
- ▶ youth clubs
- ▶ mothers' union meetings
- ▶ crèche facilities for young mothers
- ▶ summer fetes
- ▶ organisations like cubs and brownies
- ▶ fitness classes or slimming groups
- ▶ Christmas parties for old age pensioners
- ▶ birthday parties
- ▶ as family and community centres
- ▶ emergency shelters.



■ The worldwide Church

► The importance of mission, evangelism and Church growth

Key Concept

Evangelism Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith.



Many Christians feel they have a duty to convert others to the Christian faith.

► Evangelism

Evangelism is the way in which the gospel is spread – it means ‘preaching the good news’ and is one way in which the Church grows. By telling others about Jesus’ message, Christians hope to convert them to the Christian faith.

All Christians are evangelists in the sense they are sharing the good news with other people in their everyday lives. However, for many Christians, evangelism is best shown through the way they live their lives rather than talking about religion.

► Mission

The mission is what the Church is supposed to do in terms of every Christian being an evangelist as ‘a preacher of the Gospel’. At the time of Jesus it was important that the early Christians had a sense of mission to convert Jews and others to the new religion of Christianity. It is the mission of the Church to help Christians live a life of faith but also to tell the Christian message of salvation to all. Many Christians regard it as their duty or mission to convert other people to Christianity, whether they have no faith at all or belong to a different religion.

In the past, missionary work had the clear intention of bringing people to the Christian faith. Though at the same time missionaries were also important for bringing education and health support to poor and disadvantaged people around the world.

Today missionary work and evangelism are more contentious, and many would debate the ethics of trying to convert people to Christianity. In an increasingly pluralist society many think that you should be respectful of different faiths (or non-religious beliefs) rather than trying to persuade people to change religion.

Tasks

- 1 Select five different activities run by the Church (for example, coffee mornings for the elderly). For each, outline how they serve the community.
- 2 In one sentence, describe ‘evangelism’.
- 3 Why is evangelism important within Christianity?
- 4 Suggest two reasons why mission and evangelism might be difficult in twenty-first-century Britain.

Church growth

There has been a decline in attendance at Church of England and Catholic churches in the UK. In January 2016 it was reported that Church of England weekly attendance had dropped to its lowest ever level – below one million. Many churches are closing because of falling church attendance. When this happens there is an issue about what happens to churches, as they have been ‘sacred spaces’.

However, some churches are thriving in Britain. Evangelical churches in particular have grown in recent years. Some Christians have decided to leave their own denomination and join a more evangelical church. Evangelical church services are very animated and charismatic. Worship has a direct focus on Bible reading, hymn singing and preaching. There is no formal liturgy and services are spontaneous; people worship and believe they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

Some Evangelical churches have been engaging in the process of church planting. Church planting is the process of establishing new non-traditional churches and has been successful in many areas. It happens when groups from an existing church split off and go to a new area to establish a church there. The Ichthus Fellowship, which started in London in 1974, aims to spread Christian values by Church planting. They have established new churches across London and Kent and have links with churches across the UK and abroad.



Café churches aim to appeal to people who don't attend traditional church services.

Fresh Expressions

Fresh Expressions refers to a movement in the Church of England to change the way some churches and congregations meet and worship. This is an attempt to attract people to the church who wouldn't usually attend church services. Groups often meet in less traditional settings and are more informal.

One type of fresh expression, is a café church. These might take place in a café linked to a church or in a commercial café. People will meet there to talk about their faith at the same time as having refreshments. Other locations for fresh expressions gatherings include workplaces, gyms and even a beach!

Worldwide Church growth

It is important to remember Christianity is a world religion and it is spreading and growing very successfully in other parts of the world, for example Asia, South America and particularly Africa. The Pew Research Center estimates that by 2050, four in ten Christians will live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Task

Copy and complete the table below, outlining the different evidence which proves that Churches are still important in twenty-first-century Britain, and the evidence which shows that they are no longer important.

Churches are still important	Churches are no longer important
Faith can never become outdated or less important.	Church attendance is falling.

► The work of Tearfund

Tearfund is a Christian charity whose aim is to put Christian beliefs and Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour' into action. Christians believe they are putting into practice the unconditional or unselfish love Jesus talks about in the gospel. This sort of love is known as 'agape' love.

The charity works through church groups giving help to the poor in many countries. Tearfund currently works in over 50 countries providing emergency aid when natural disasters occur and carrying out long-term projects to support local communities.

In the UK many people support Tearfund by raising money through coffee mornings and buying Tearfund Christmas cards.

There is a lot of information about the work of Tearfund on their official website at tearfund.org.

Why is Tearfund important?

- ▶ Tearfund has a role in raising public awareness of social issues, such as poverty and discrimination in the world.
- ▶ Tearfund campaigns against the causes of poverty worldwide.
- ▶ Tearfund gives practical help in order to act out the teachings of Jesus to help others.
- ▶ Tearfund encourages self-help for both individuals and communities.

Tearfund in Columbia

One example of how Tearfund put Christian beliefs in to action is their work with children and teenagers in Columbia. By working with partner agencies, churches and youth groups in the country Tearfund has set up 30 sports clubs where children can come for football training.

These clubs provide safe spaces for young people, at risk of joining gangs, to come and socialise. They also offer mentoring to equip them with life skills.

► Persecution of Christians past and present

Persecution persistently cruel treatment, often due to religion or belief.

Persecution of Christians has always taken place and the word 'martyr' is used for someone who dies or is killed for their religious beliefs. Jesus himself was a martyr and he warned the disciples they would be persecuted for their faith; each one of them was eventually martyred. Christians believe they were given a divine commission from Jesus to spread the good news of the Gospel and this may be in the face of personal danger. Christian persecution continues into the twenty-first century in a number of countries throughout the world.

In some parts of the world Christians are treated unjustly in societies where the Christian faith is a minority religion. For example, terrorist organisations like Islamic State in the Middle East have targeted Christians, forcing them from their homes and subjecting them to violent attacks.

Evangelical Christian organisations, such as Christian Freedom International and Open Doors, seek to help persecuted Christians. These organisations provide practical help to persecuted Christians, provide Bibles and work actively for the human rights of Christians suffering persecution.

Open Doors

Open Doors was established in 1955 when Brother Andrew, a Dutch missionary, smuggled Bibles into the Soviet Union. Under the communist system in the Soviet Union Christian Churches were persecuted.

Today Open Doors still supports persecuted Christians across the world in different ways:

- ▶ It distributes Bibles and other resources to those who might not have access to Bibles, or may have had them confiscated.
- ▶ It trains Christians and Church leaders to deal with the trauma they may be suffering while maintaining their faith.
- ▶ It provides practical support for Christians who have been the victims of disasters.
- ▶ It speaks on behalf of persecuted Christians to raise awareness of their situation and gather support, for example by lobbying MPs in the UK government.

People in the UK and in Ireland support their work both practically and financially.

Task

Discuss some of the 'core questions' on page 164 in pairs. Write a brief answer to one of them, showing you have thought about different perspectives.

▶ Working for Christian reconciliation

Reconciliation is the idea that people should make up after an argument and move on. Within the Christian Church there are many different denominations and in the past these differences have led to conflict and tension. Many Christians believe it is important for the different Christian denominations to work together as much as possible. Today, living in a pluralist society, the need for the different Christian denominations to work together is greater than ever.

Two important organisations working for Christian reconciliation in the world today are the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches.

The Ecumenical Movement

'Ecumenical' means relating to a number of different Christian Churches and the Ecumenical Movement is an attempt to bring closer together the different Christian denominations and promote Christian unity throughout the world.



World Council of Churches

It began with the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910. The movement aimed to unify the Protestant Churches of the world and ultimately all Christians.

As a result of the work of the Ecumenical Movement there is much more cooperation between different Christian denominations, such as different Churches sharing a common building and joint ecumenical services. Although denominational differences still exist, today many Christians believe there should only be one church. At a local level, many churches actually cooperate and work together.

The World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches is:

'A worldwide fellowship of churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service.' The aim of these churches is to be 'a visible sign ... deepening communion ... sharing the Gospel together ... making connections'.

Each year, the World Council of Churches holds a special week of prayer for Christian unity. It brings together churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries. The Roman Catholic Church isn't a member of the World Council of Churches, but does take part in some national and local ecumenical organisations.

At a local level 'Churches Together in England', grew out of the work of the World Council of Churches and is a practical attempt to focus locally on the fellowship of those who share the Christian faith. The aim today is to offer practical ways of achieving greater unity. During the week of prayer for Christian unity each January, special ecumenical services are organised.

Tasks

- 1 What is Tearfund and how do they put Christian beliefs into practice?
- 2 In one sentence, state what is meant by 'reconciliation'.
- 3 Why is it important for different Christian Churches or denominations to work together? Give two different reasons.
- 4 Closely read the text on this and the previous page about the Ecumenical Movement and the World Council of Churches. Suggest three advantages of the movements and three disadvantages.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Promotes reconciliation	Is only open to Christian denominations

End of section review

Stickability

Key concepts:

- Evangelism
- Sacraments

Key practices:

- Worship
- Prayer
- Baptism
- Eucharist
- Celebrations
- Pilgrimages
- Mission
- Reconciliation

Skills Link

- 1 State two ways in which Christians may worship God.
- 2 'Great Britain is a Christian country.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view including the fact that religious traditions in Britain are in the main Christian and also diverse.

Knowledge check

- 1 Write a short paragraph (roughly three sentences) to explain what Christians believe about prayer.
- 2 Write a long paragraph (roughly eight to ten sentences) to explain why some Christians believe the sacraments are important.
- 3 Explain, with specific reference to Taizé and Walsingham, why Christians might choose to go on a pilgrimage.
- 4 Write a developed paragraph (approximately 6–8 sentences long) to explain why some people argue that Churches are no longer necessary in twenty-first-century Britain. Include three different reasons in your answer

The Big Question

'Pilgrimage is still important in Britain today.'

Your task

Respond to the statement above, showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Give reasoned judgements on the validity and strength of these views.

Task

You need to explain in detail religious teachings about **baptism**. Use the guidance below to help you to write a **developed explanation** for Christianity. Ensure that you use key terms fluently and frequently.

All/many/most Christians believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote..... This means that/Because of this they

Some/other Christians such as believe that This comes from the teaching/Bible quote This means that/Because of this they

Finally, Christians such as believe that This means that/Because of this they

Their beliefs do/do not differ because

► Exam focus

Christianity: Practices

Questions on charities and people

You will be expected to explain or describe the work of various charities or people.

None of these questions will expect you to give a biography of the person or charity. Questions will ask for a particular focus which must be the central focus of your response.

Look at the following question:

(b) Describe how Tearfund helps those in need. (5)

Firstly, write down:

- How many marks are there?
- What is the question asking me to do?

Secondly look at the mark bands on page vii. How many marks would you give to Tony's answer below? What advice would you give to him before he rewrites his answer?

Tearfund is an important Christian charity it used to be called the Evangelical Alliance Relief Committee.

In 1969 Cliff Richard did two fundraising concerts for Tearfund at London's Royal Albert Hall. Tearfund helps those in need wherever they might be.

Reflecting the diversity within a religion

In your answers it is important to refer to diversity of belief and practice where it exists. There are very few responses where you can say 'All Christians believe ...'. Within every religion there are different beliefs and practices. This can sometimes arise because of different interpretations of biblical passages or because of different beliefs. Look at the question below.

(c) Explain why baptism is important for many Christians. (8)

Consider:

- How many marks are awarded for the question?
- What is the question asking you to do?

Now write an answer in just eight minutes. In your answer you need to refer to infant and adult baptism.