

# Unit 1: Christianity Beliefs & teachings



## Key beliefs

Christianity is a **monotheistic** religion – they believe in **one** God.

There are three main branches of Christianity, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. The Protestant branch has split into various denominations or groups. E.g. Methodist, Baptist.

**Christians believe God is:**

**Omnipotent** (*all powerful*)

**Omniscient** (*all knowing*)

**Omnipresent** (*everywhere*)

**Benevolent** (*loving*)

**Transcendent** (*beyond understanding*)

**Immanent** (*personal*)

**Eternal** (*no beginning and no end*)

**Forgiving** (*he will forgive sins*)

**Just** (*Judge humankind and never support injustice*)

## The Trinity

God is understood as the relationship of love between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three elements are referred to as 'persons', although it is only in Jesus's case that this means a physical presence.

**God the Father** The creator of all life, omnipotent, omniscient, and present everywhere. Acts as father for all of his children.

**God the Son** God incarnate through Jesus Christ. Both fully God and fully human. Son refers to his special relationship with the Father.

**God the Holy Spirit** Unseen power of God at work in the universe. Influences, guides and sustains.



## Creation

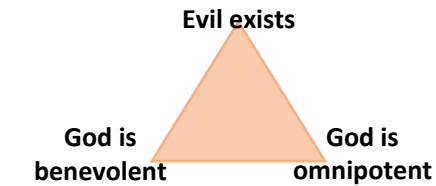


Christians believe in creation by God. The Father designed the universe perfectly and created all life on it. **The Word**, another term for Jesus, was active during this creation as was the Holy Spirit.

**'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'**  
John 1:1-3

Many Christians believe that although not scientifically accurate, the creation story contains many elements of religious truth. Some Christians however believe that creation happened literally within 6 days as it states within Genesis. Christians believe that God created out of choice and that everything was good. They also believe that God continues to create even today.

## The Problem of Evil



**Moral evil** = suffering caused by humans

**Natural evil** = suffering caused by nature

**Responses:**

1. Suffering is a **necessary** part of life
2. Suffering is **temporary**
3. Suffering is a punishment for **sin**
4. Suffering is caused by humanity's **free will**
5. Suffering is a part of God's **plan**
6. Suffering is a **test of faith**  
Christians believe they will be **judged** on their actions in this life on judgement day

## Resurrection and life after death

Some Christians believe that the soul is resurrected soon after death. Other Christians believe the soul will be resurrected at some time in the future when Jesus will return to judge all souls. Some Christians believe resurrection will just be spiritual and not physical at all. Catholics and Orthodox Christians believe in bodily resurrection. This means that although the physical body is lost at death, a new spiritual body will be made which is resurrected into the afterlife with the soul. **'It is raised imperishable'** 1 Corinthians. Resurrection inspires Christians, shows them that God loves them, gives them hope for the future, gives them proof of life after death and confidence in the face of death.

## The Afterlife and Judgement

### The Afterlife

Christian beliefs about the afterlife vary but essentially they believe there will be eternal life dependent on faith and judgement from God. They believe in heaven and hell and that Christians will enter one of these places either very soon after death or on the Day of Judgement.

### Judgement

God will judge humans based on their actions as well as faith in Jesus. In the Parable of the Sheep and Goats it explains the idea of judgement and what God is looking for. Serving and loving others is essential for salvation. **'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat'**

## Heaven and Hell

### Heaven

Heaven is traditionally seen as a physical place where God is. Jesus called it **"paradise"** or **"my Father's house"**. A more modern view is that heaven is simply 'with God'.

### Purgatory

Roman Catholics believe there is a place before heaven, where people go to have their sins cleansed. People say prayers for **souls** to be released from Purgatory.

### Hell

Hell can be an actual place of torment and suffering OR it can be when man is separated from God.

### Soul

**Our souls are:**

- Immortal
- God-given
- Eternal
- Make us distinct from the rest of creation
- Return to God when we die

## Key Words

Catholic Orthodox Protestant  
Denomination God Omnipotent  
Benevolent Omniscient Just  
Trinity Holy Spirit Son of God  
Creation Genesis The Word  
Incarnation Resurrection  
Crucifixion Ascension Heaven  
Hell Justice Afterlife Day of  
Judgement Purgatory Satan Sin  
Salvation Grace Forgiveness  
Atonement Mass

## The Crucifixion of Christ

One of the most detailed stories we have from the whole of Jesus' life is the account of how he died. He was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, and his death was to be by crucifixion. Even though Christians believe that Jesus was the Son of God, it does not mean that he was somehow spared the pain and horror of his crucifixion.

### There are several ways in which the crucifixion influences Christians today:

- It gives them **confidence** that if they accept Jesus' sacrifice, sin can no longer destroy their lives because God forgives those who faithfully ask for forgiveness
- They believe that suffering is a part of life, just as it was a part of Jesus' life and that, having experienced it, **God understands** what the sufferer is going through.

## Incarnation

Christians believe Jesus is the Son of God. He is God in **human form**, or God '**incarnate**'.  
*"The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"*

- Jesus gave humanity an **example** to follow.
- Even though Jesus is God in human form, he valued everyone equally: *"For you are all one in Christ"*.
- God **sacrificed** himself on the cross to take away the sins of human beings: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son"*
- Jesus is both immanent and personal

# Unit 1: Christianity Beliefs & teachings Jesus

## Jesus' Resurrection & Ascension

*Matthew 28:1-7; Mark 6:1; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-9*

According to the accounts of Jesus' burial in the NT, he was placed in a tomb late Friday afternoon (Good Friday). How long he remained there is unclear, but we know that some of Jesus' female followers went to the tomb to anoint the body. Though details of the story vary between the 4 gospel accounts, they all make it clear that Jesus was nowhere to be found.

The belief that Jesus rose from the dead is known as the **resurrection** and is a key teaching in the Christian faith. For Christians, it is **significant evidence** of the divine nature of Jesus.

Only Mark and Luke's gospels finish off their story by telling their readers that, after meeting his disciples and asking them to carry on his good work, Jesus left them for the last time and **ascended**, body and soul, into Heaven.

## Sin and Salvation

Salvation means '**to be saved from a bad situation**'. In Christianity, this bad situation is sin, and the consequences of sin. **Sin** has separated humans from God, and salvation enables humans to get close to God again.

Christians believe that Jesus' death makes up for the **original sin** committed by Adam & Eve and so can bring people back to God.

Jesus knew his death was **necessary** to restore the relationship between God and the believers and make the opportunity for salvation available to all people. Jesus (as the Son of God) could have easily avoided being crucified. His crucifixion was the result of human evil against an innocent man. It needed to happen, in order to **atone** for the sins of humanity.

The two means of salvation are **good works** and **grace**.

## Parables

A story used to teach a lesson or a moral

### The Good Samaritan

*"Love your neighbour"*



### The sheep & the goats

*"Whatever you did for the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me"*



## Miracles

An act which seems to break the laws of nature

### Calming the storm

This is a miracle over **NATURE**

### Water into wine

This was Jesus' **first** miracle

### Healing a paralysed man

This is a **HEALING** miracle

## Worship

**Liturgical** – Follows a set routine e.g. RC  
**Non-liturgical** - Does not follow a set routine

**Charismatic** – informal; spirit-inspired

**Rosary** – a string of beads with a crucifix attached

**Meditation** – thoughtfulness, focused on a religious truth

**Quaker meetings** – Completely informal, with no leader or structure

**The Bible** – regardless of the type of worship, it will always have a focus on the Bible

**Private** – worshipping alone

**Prayer** – Communicating with God

## Why is worship important?

- It brings a sense of **togetherness** as a community
- It makes a person **feel closer** to God
- It is **peaceful** – allowing for prayer and meditation
- It is an **external expression** of their faith
- Christians **praise** God as the eternal Being and source of everything that exists

## Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage is a visit to a place regarded as holy for the believer. Often, the journey is also special. Pilgrimage has always played an important role in the history of Christianity, though it is not a compulsory duty and many today see no need to go on pilgrimage.

Some examples of Christian places of pilgrimage are: **Lourdes, Iona**, the Holy Land (Israel) and Canterbury.

## Prayer

Jesus spoke about prayer on a number of occasions. Some Christians follow set prayer (such as **the Lord's prayer** (which Jesus taught his disciples), whereas others make them more personal.

There are different types of prayer:

- Thanksgiving
- Adoration
- Confession
- Petition
- Intercession

# Practices: Christianity



## Sacraments

A **sacrament** = an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace

**Protestant Churches** = only **2** sacraments: Baptism and Eucharist.

**RC & Orthodox Churches** = **7** sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick.

### Baptism

Jesus was baptised by John and, during the baptism, Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit entering his life and heard God's assurance that he was the Son of God.

Just before his ascension, Jesus told his disciples to: *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit"*. Baptism was a rite of **initiation** into the community right from the start and there are many references to baptism throughout the NT.

### Eucharist

The Eucharist is celebrated by nearly all Christian denominations and has many names, such as Holy Communion. The central features are the same: the connection with Jesus' Last Supper, the giving of thanks for the bread and wine (consecration) and using Jesus' words at the last supper. RC Christians believe in **transubstantiation** – the bread & wine literally turns into the body & blood of Christ. Whereas Protestants do not believe this.

**"Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith"**

## The Church in the local community

The Church has always been involved in caring for others. For example, in the Middle Ages the monasteries provided education, hospitality for travellers and treatment for the sick. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a London church set up the first **Samaritans** phone service for those feeling suicidal. In the Parable of the Sheep & the Goats, Jesus told his disciples that whatever they did or failed to do for someone, however insignificant the deed or situation, they did/or failed to do, for Jesus.

One way in which Christians put their faith into action is through food banks and street pastors.

**Key organisations** (research these!)

- **Corrymeela** – reconciliation & ecumenism
- **Open Doors** – Supports persecuted Christians
- **Spring Harvest** – Mission & evangelism
- **Community of the cross of nails**
- **CAFOD** – Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
- **Tearfund**
- **Christian Aid**

## Key beliefs about God

- There is only **ONE** God (**monotheism**). The 'oneness' of God is called **Tawhid** in Arabic
- Muslims call God **Allah**, which means 'the one true God'
- God cannot be divided and has never had a Son.
- In **the Qur'an** and **the Sunnah**, Allah has 99 'names'. E.g the Merciful, the Just, the Almighty...
- **Allah** is the same God that Jews and Christians worship
- **Allah** has **revealed** his will through his **prophets**
- Muslims share many of the beliefs that Jews and Christians have about God E.g. He is the creator, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, etc.
- **Allah** must never be pictured
- **Allah** is beyond understanding and nothing must ever be compared to **Allah**. Comparing things to **Allah** is a terrible sin
- All humans must 'submit' to the will of **Allah** (Islam means 'submission')



## Predestination

- **Allah** is in total control of all events and *knows* everything that will happen
  - Because **Allah** is **transcendent** (beyond time and space), he is not limited by time or space
- BUT**
- **Allah** does not *decide* what will happen
  - Humans have **free-will** and are responsible for their choices
  - Humans will be judged by **Allah** based on their choices

# Beliefs & Teachings: Islam

## RISALAH: The Prophets

### Prophethood

- **Allah** appoints particular people to spread his messages
- These people receive **revelation** from **Allah** through his **Angels**
- There are 25 key **prophets** of Allah identified in **the Qur'an**, including Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus)

### Adam

- Created specially by **Allah**.
- Given **dominion** over the earth by **Allah**
- The first human to communicate with **Allah**
- The first Muslim

### Ibrahim

- One of **Allah's** most faithful servants
- Opposed **idolatry**
- Risked his life to argue for **monotheism**
- A great role-model
- An ancestor of **Muhammad**

### Muhammad

- **Allah's** final and greatest **prophet**
- Received the **revelation of the Qur'an**
- A great teacher
- A great role-model
- A military commander
- Set up the first Muslim community in **Makkah**
- Must be respected but not worshipped

## Sunni and Shi'a Islam

### Sunni Muslims (majority)

- See the elected **Caliphs** as the successors of **Muhammad**
- Follow the 6 'articles of faith': **Tawhid**, the **Day of Judgement**, the **Prophets**, **Angels**, the supremacy of **Allah's** will and the authority of **the Qur'an**.

### Shia Muslims (minority)

- See the **Imams** (descendants of **Muhammad**) as **Muhammad's** successors
- Believe each **Imam** must choose his successor before he dies
- Follow the 5 'roots' of Usul ad-Din: **Tawhid**, **Prophethood**, **Allah's Justice (Adalat)**, **Resurrection** and the **Imamate**

## AKHIRAH: Life after death

### HEAVEN AND HELL

- Described in different ways by different Muslims
- People go to heaven or hell for eternity after the **Day of Judgement**
- Heaven described in **the Qur'an** as a garden paradise
- Hell described in **the Qur'an** as a place of fire and pain
- Faithful and righteous Muslims will go to heaven
- Non-Muslims and unrighteous Muslims will go to hell

### ANGELS

- Bring **Allah's** **revelations** to his **prophets**
- Created by **Allah** from light
- Usually invisible but sometimes take human form
- Pure and sinless
- Do not have **free-will**
- Have various roles
- Some are named E.g. Jibril, Mika'il, Israfil, Iblis

### The Day of Judgment

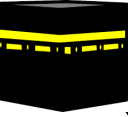
- When all humans will be judged by **Allah** based on how they have lived
- Judgement will lead to punishment (hell) or reward (heaven)
- Preceded by a state of waiting in the grave called **barzakh**
- While in the grave, people are questioned by **Angels**
- People will be **resurrected** before their judgement

## The Qur'an

- The word of **Allah** given to **Muhammad** through Jibril
- Originally dictated in Arabic
- The original words have never been altered
- Infallible: corrects all previous **revelation** from God
- Divided into '**Surahs**
- Supplemented by **the Hadiths** and **the Sunnah**

# 5 pillars of Sunni Islam

# Practices: Islam



**Shahadah**

### Declaration of faith

**“There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.”**

This shows the acceptance of **Allah & Muhammad**.

### Role of Shahadah today:

- Said before death
- Whispered into the ears of a new born
- Recited aloud in front of witnesses to become a Muslim

**Salah**

### Prayer

Performing ritual prayers in the proper way 5 times a day. Men are expected to attend the mosque to pray. Prayer can happen anywhere that is clean. Muslims recite verses from the **Qur’an** when performing **Salah**.

**“Prostrate and draw near to Allah.” (Qur’an)**

5 prayers were instructed by **Allah**, so whoever does them will be admitted into paradise.

**Sawm**

### Fasting

Abstaining from food, drink, sex, smoking and bath thoughts/deeds during daylight hours, in the month of **Ramadan**.

**“O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you.” (Qur’an)**

### Exempt:

The elderly, children, pregnant women, those travelling and those who are physically and mentally unwell do NOT have to take part.

### Benefits:

Muslims feel closer to **Allah** and develop ideas of self-control and discipline.

**Zakah**

### Almsgiving

Compulsory giving of 2.5% of one’s income to charitable causes.

### Benefits:

- It helps Muslims grow spiritually and frees them from greed and selfishness.
- It helps those who need it most.
- Wealth is a gift from **Allah** so should be shared.
- It is a sign of unity and supports the **Ummah**.

**“Be steadfast in prayer and giving.” (Qur’an)**

**Hajj**

### Pilgrimage

It is the duty of every Muslim to perform the pilgrimage to **Mecca** at least once in their lifetime.

**“Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it.”**

**“Proclaim that people shall observe Hajj pilgrimage.” (Qur’an)**

Hajj is intended to allow Muslims to get closer to **Allah**. It reminds them that all Muslims are equal and are part of the **Ummah**.

## Salah

**Khutbah:** Sermon

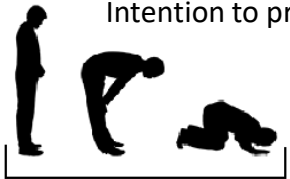
**Minbar:** Raised platform



**Wudu:** Ritual washing before prayer

### Niyah:

Intention to pray



First Rak'ah

**Rak'ah:** One unit of prayer



Second Rak'ah

### Jumma prayers

Jumma is the weekly communal Salah performed midday on Friday.

The **Imam** leads the prayer and gives a sermon as part of the service.

Men and women pray separately to STOP all distractions.

To MISS 4 Friday prayers would make a person an unbeliever. Muslims believe that the reward for praying with others is 27 times greater than from praying alone.


**Qibla:** Direction of Mecca



**“Salah is a prescribed duty that has to be performed at the given time by the Qur’an.” (Qur’an)**

**Adhan:** Call to pray

**Iqamah:** Second call to prayer

Place and actions performed	Significance
<b>Arriving on Hajj</b> Muslims put on ihram (white seamless robes). This is also understood by Muslims to be a 'state of ihram', as it includes ideas of behaving appropriately and focusing only on Allah.	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates unity, with all Muslims dressed identically.</li> <li>• Shows equality before Allah.</li> <li>• Strengthens the feeling of commitment between all Muslims in the ummah.</li> </ul>
<b>Makkah</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muslims perform Tawaf, which is circling the Ka'aba seven times in an anticlockwise direction. This is also repeated at the end of Hajj.</li> <li>• Muslims also complete the sa'y – running between the hills of Safa and Marwa.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tawaf demonstrates the unity of all Muslims together in submission to Allah as they move in harmony around the Ka'aba.</li> <li>• Sa'y is done in remembrance of the story of Hagar searching for water in the desert.</li> </ul>
<b>Muzdalifah</b> Muslims camp here overnight.	Muslims need to ensure they rest, as Hajj is a difficult and tiring journey.
<b>Arafat</b> The 'Stand' where Muslims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• praise Allah</li> <li>• read from the Qur'an</li> <li>• ask for forgiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The heat of standing in the sun reminds Muslims of the Day of Judgement.</li> <li>• This is a time for Muslims to reflect on what they have done wrong and ask Allah for forgiveness.</li> </ul>
<b>Mina</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muslims collect and throw stones at pillars.</li> <li>• An animal is sacrificed, men's heads will be shaved and women cut off a lock of their hair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbolises rejecting the devil and evil.</li> <li>• The animal is sacrificed as part of the celebration of the festival of Id-ul-Adha, which remembers the sacrifice Ibrahim was willing to make of his son Ishmael.</li> <li>• The hair is cut as a symbol of purity.</li> </ul>

## 10 obligatory acts of Shi'a Islam

1. **Salah** - prayer
2. **Sawm** – fasting
3. **Zakah** – charitable giving
4. **Khums** – 20% tax on income
5. **Hajj** – pilgrimage
6. **Jihad**
7. **Amr-bil-Maruf** – encouraging people to do what is good
8. **Nah Anil Munkar** – Discouraging people from doing what is wrong
9. **Tawallah** – to be loving towards friends of God
10. **Tabarra** – disassociating from enemies of God.

## Jihad

**Jihad is an important concept for Muslims. It refers to struggling against evil, either as an individual or as the collective fellowship of Islam.**

**Greater jihad** is a personal, inward struggle of all Muslims to live in line with the teachings of their faith. **“This is My path, leading straight, so follow it, and do not follow other ways.” (Qur’an)**

**Lesser jihad** is seen as the outward struggle to defend Islam from threat. In the early days of the faith, this was important when Muslims were being persecuted and they needed to protect their freedom to practise their faith. **“Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you.” (Qur’an)**

Greater Jihad	Lesser Jihad
<b>Inner struggle to be a better Muslim</b>	<b>Military struggle to defend Islam</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Studying the Qur’an</li> <li>- Doing good deeds</li> <li>- Attending mosque regularly</li> <li>- Completing the 5 pillars of Islam</li> <li>- Forgiving someone who has insulted you</li> <li>- Giving up things for the poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fought as a LAST resort</li> <li>- Fought for a JUST cause</li> <li>- Minimum amount of suffering should be caused</li> <li>- Women and children should NOT be harmed</li> <li>- Aims to restore peace/freedom</li> </ul>

## Ashura

The day of **Ashura** (Day of remembrance) is a major Shi’a festival that takes place on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month of **Muharram**. Shi’a Muslims remember the **death of Hussein** (Muhammad’s grandson) in **Karbala, Iraq**.

In many Muslim countries a **public holiday** takes place. Some Muslims will beat themselves with chains, **beat their chest** or (a minority) cut themselves. People **wear black** as a sign of grief. **Poems** about the tragedy are read and people will **cry**.

For **Shi’a** Muslims there is a great deal to learn from this festival; firstly **Hussein** should never be forgotten and that they should stand up for **justice** to better society.

For Sunni Muslims, **Ashura** is a day when many **fast voluntarily**. It is a day of **atonement** – sins are forgiven if repented. Muslims also remember how **Nuh (Noah)** left the Ark and how **Musa (Moses)** and the Israelites were saved from the Egyptians.

## Festivals

The first **Eid** is believed to have been celebrated by the **Prophet Muhammad**. **‘Eid Mubarak’** means blessed celebration. This is a traditional greeting used by Muslims. The Eid morning, men attend Eid prayers at the mosques which include two sermons explaining the rules of **Zakah** and focusing on **Ibrahim**, the poor and responsibilities Muslims have.

## Exam Practice

Give TWO ways Muslims can demonstrate Jihad. [2 marks]

Explain TWO contrasting ways in which Muslims celebrate the festival of Ashura. [4 marks]

Explain TWO ways in which Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. Refer to Muslim teaching in your answer. [5 marks]

Shahadah is the most important of the 5 pillars. [12 marks]

Prayer is more beneficial than going on Hajj. [12 marks]

	Importance	How it is celebrated
<b>Eid-ul-Adha</b>	Known as the festival of sacrifice. It remembers & honors <b>Ibrahim</b> (Prophet), who was willing to sacrifice his son on Allah’s command. The story is found in Surah 37.	Forms a part of Hajj; Animals are sacrificed; Muslims give money to the poor; cards & presents are given to friends and family.
<b>Eid-ul-Fitr</b>	Marks the end of the month of Ramadan. It is a time to thank Allah for his help in getting them through the month of fasting.	Prayers; decorations; best clothes; feasts; cards & presents

## Contraception

**Artificial** – man made e.g. condom

**Natural** – a type of practice or behaviour aimed at preventing pregnancy e.g. NFP (natural family planning)

Christianity teaches that sex should be open to the possibility of **procreation**. Therefore, by using contraception, you are preventing procreation from happening. **The Roman Catholic Church** teaches that the use of contraception is a sin. **The Church of England** teaches that sex should open to procreation, however, it accepts that sex is also an **expression of love** and promotes **responsible parenthood**. Therefore, the use of contraception is encouraged if you cannot properly look after an raise a child. You should wait until you're ready.

**Islam** teaches that children are a blessing from God, if a couple wishes to have them. Muhammad taught that parents should only have as many children as they can properly look after – **responsible parenthood**. So Muslims can and should use contraception.

## Families

- **Nuclear** – mum & dad + children
- **Extended** – Nuclear family + other relatives
- **Single-parent** – mum or dad + children
- **Polygamy** – illegal in the UK. Man + more than 1 wife

Many people would argue that the best place for raising children is within a family environment/ Religious families also provide a basis for a religious upbringing, enabling parents to educate their child in a faith.

# Theme A: Relationships & families

## Sexual relationships

Roman Catholics believe that sex should have 2 purposes: to **UNITE** a couple in married love and to **CREATE** new life. **Pre-marital** sex is a sin, as is masturbation (as it cannot lead to procreation). Some other Christians accept sex before marriage in a committed and loving relationship, as it is an **expression of love**. The Bible says “Do not commit **adultery**”, so having sex with someone other than your marriage partner is committing a **sin**.

**Islam** teaches that it is a religious duty to marry & have children. Every person should be a virgin before marriage, and observe **chastity** before and during marriage.

## Gender equality

Traditionally, men have held positions of authority in most religions. However, there is a debate about what the role of women should be. In the **RC Church** women cannot become priests. Many argue this because: Jesus had male disciples; Jesus chose a man to lead his Church after his ascension (Peter); A woman cannot completely represent Christ during the Eucharist. In the **C of E** women can become both vicars and bishops.

Some of the earliest converts to Christianity were women, for example Priscilla at Ephesus.

**“There is neither Jew nor gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and females, for you are all one in Christ” (Galatians 3:28)**

**“So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27)**

## Homosexual relationships

For some Christians, **homosexual** sex is thought to be unnatural and cannot lead to pregnancy, so it is a sin and it is wrong. In places, the Bible also says it is wrong for a man to sleep with another man, which has also been used to show that homosexuality is wrong.

The **Qur'an** sets out specific punishments for those who have homosexual relationships. It calls these people fornicators, and **punishment** is severe e.g. flogging or execution.

**“Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith”**

## Marriage & divorce

Marriage is a sacrament in some Christian traditions; it brings a blessing from god. In marriage, a couple promise to each other through **vows/promises**, to be good to each other, to be faithful, to love and cherish each other, until the marriage is ended by death. The rings represent the eternal bond the couple are entering into, in front of God.

For **RC** Christians, divorce is always wrong. Marriage is a sacrament which cannot be broken. The vows state **“until death do us part”** and these promises are binding.

It is possible to have an **annulment**, which is where the marriage is set aside, as if it were never real.

For most other Christians, divorce is discouraged but acceptable as a last resort. It is sometimes the **lesser of two evils**, and also a **necessary** evil.

### Christianity teaches:

- God hates divorce (OT)
- “Whoever divorces... then marries another; it as if he committed adultery” (Jesus)
- We should forgive those who wrong us and show love to all (Jesus)

## Euthanasia

Euthanasia is illegal in the UK, It can be seen as assisted suicide, therefore breaking the **Suicide Act of 1961**. It can be viewed as manslaughter or murder and carries a prison sentence.

Some people believe that people should have the right to end their own life if they are terminally ill, incapacitated or in severe pain. This is known as euthanasia. In the UK, this is currently against the law, although in some other countries it is legal (Switzerland, Netherlands and Belgium). Some Christians believe that people should not be able to end their own life because all life is sacred, and that the terminally ill should be cared for in **hospices** at the end of their lives.

Islam tells us that Euthanasia is **zulm: wrong doing against Allah**.

**Active euthanasia:** being given lethal drugs to end a persons life so there illness does not kill them.

**Passive euthanasia:** a person stops taking medication to end their life.

## Sanctity of Life

Many religions believe that life is **sacred** because God created it, including Islam and Christianity. Christians believe that all life is sacred, and precious. Some Christians do not believe that anyone should take their own life or the life of someone else. Therefore some Christians believe that euthanasia and abortion is wrong, as it is wrong to end a human life. In all legal systems **murder** is the worst crime you could commit.

# Theme B: Religion and Life

## The Use of Animals

Many medicines are tested on animals before they can be used on humans to ensure that they are safe. This is very controversial because many people think that it cruel and unnecessary. However others believe that animal experimentation is necessary to make breakthroughs in science and technology, and to manufacture effective cures. For example many surgical procedures such as transplanted surgery were traditionally perfected on animals.

Christians and Muslims are allowed to eat meat in their diets, although Muslims do not eat pork and some Christians fast during Lent. **Vegetarian:** a person who does not eat meat.

## Abortion

The law defines abortion as *“the deliberate expulsion of a foetus from the womb, with the intention of destroying it”*. In the UK abortion is allowed up until 24 weeks of a pregnancy under special circumstances, i.e. if two registered doctors agree that there is a danger to the women’s mental or physical health, the foetus will be born with disabilities, or the mental or physical health of existing children will be put at risk. Some people do not believe that abortion is right because it means terminating the life of an unborn child. However, many people believe that it is the woman who should have the choice as to what happens to her body and therefore it is for her to make up her own mind. There are also circumstances such as rape, genetic abnormalities or failed contraception which cause debate on both sides of the argument.

In Islam, the life of the mother takes precedence – she is a fully developed human with responsibilities, whereas the foetus is not even born and will need everything doing for it.

**Pro-Life:** term used for arguments against abortion

**Pro-choice:** arguments in favour of having the CHOICE to choose an abortion

**“Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith”**

## Origins of the Universe and Life

Some Christians believe that the universe was created by God in 7 days. This is described in the bible in the book of **Genesis**. The bible says that Adam and Eve were the first man and women. Christians who believe the literal truth of the bible are known as **Creationists**. Other Christians think the creation story is a metaphor for the creation of the Universe, but do not believe that the world was created in 7 days.

Scientists believe that the Universe was created billions of years ago and is constantly evolving. This is known as **the Big Bang Theory**. **Charles Darwin** was a famous scientist who came up with the theories of evolution and natural selection. This theory explains that humans are descended from apes and that species are constantly evolving to adapt to their changing environment.

**Stewardship:** the idea that God created the world and that humans have a responsibility to look after it.

**Dominion:** the belief that God gave humans the right to decide what happens to the world and the species in it.



## Violence & violent protest

Christianity teaches non-violence, as Jesus said *“Blessed are the peacemakers”* and told others to turn the other cheek in the face of violence.

Christians are told to love their enemies and love each other. However, God gave humans **free will** and choice and sometimes non-violent protest is ignored, so violence may be used to force change for the common good.

Islam means **peace** and Muslims should act in a peaceful manner, but violence may be used in self-defence. Muslims have a duty to protest about anything unfair and in the UK we have seen protests over wars and issues in the Middle East, what is perceived as **Islamophobia**, **terrorism** and **racism** issues.

## Just War & Holy war

**Holy war** = it is right to fight in the name of God  
**Just war** = It is right to fight in the interests of justice & the greater good

For **Muslims** a holy war is a just war. There are rules for how Muslims should fight a war in the Qur'an. A jihad may only be fought as a last resort and must never be against a Muslim nation.

**St Paul** said Christians should obey their rulers, who had been given power by God. St Augustine was the first to try to write a set of rules regarding this, and eventually the just war rules were written in detail by St Thomas Aquinas. *Sometimes if you do not fight, you allow a greater evil to happen than a war would have caused, so you have to fight.*

# Theme D: Religion, peace & conflict

## Peace & justice

**Justice** = fairness; **Peace** = to live in harmony & without fear

Christians will fight for justice under the conditions of **The just war theory**. Whilst God desires peace, He also desires that humans should live in justice and freedom.

## Forgiveness & reconciliation

**Reconciliation** = making up between two groups after a disagreement

*“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you” ~ C.S. Lewis*

*“Forgive seventy times seven” ~ Jesus*

*“Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” ~ Jesus*

## Pacifism

**Pacifists** believe that all violence is morally wrong. They will not participate in any war, regardless of the reasons for that war. An example of a pacifist Christian group is **The Quakers**.

**Conscientious objectors** are people who refuse to participate directly in fighting wars on the grounds of conscience. However they will assist in non-military ways such as medics, relief work and mediators. Many believe they have a peace-keeping role.

**The Church of England** accepts the **just war theory** and sees wars as **necessary** in certain conditions, especially in situations where wars are waged to fight injustice.

**Buddhism** is a pacifistic religion. **The Five precepts** demand a pacifistic approach to life. **The Dalai Lama** said that *“Peace can exist if everyone respects all others”*.

## WMD

**Weapons of mass destruction** are capable of killing & maiming large groups of people. These weapons are considered unjust because they kill civilians. Some religious believers accept the existence of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

**The Roman Catholic Church** does not agree with the use of WMD but thinks they are acceptable as a deterrent.

The Quaker Society **utterly condemn** WMD. They are pacifists, and no outward weapons are acceptable. WMD are indiscriminate and beyond control.

## Religion & peace making

Christianity teaches to *“love your neighbour”* and Islam means **peace** if both of these teachings were adhered to then there would be peace. Religious groups are regularly involved in peace-keeping in war torn areas and in negotiations to prevent wars happening.

On occasions people have claimed that religion is the cause of war. For example, some fundamentalist groups such as ISIS believe that an Islamic State needs to be created.

Sometimes even with all the best efforts, religion cannot keep peace because there are overriding factors, such as the craving for power, the need to react or attack or to join allies to protect others.

**“Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith”**

## Good & evil actions and intentions

Some people suggest that those who commit the worst crimes are evil.

**But where does evil come from?**

**Christianity:** Evil is seen as the abuse of the **free will** God gave to humans. In order to be able to appreciate good, then evil has to exist. Most Christians believe in a figure called **the devil** or Satan. So, evil is a combination of internal and external factors.

**Islam:** The **Qu'ran** says there is a devil who was an angel. Iblis was expelled from paradise because he refused to bow to Adam. Iblis continually tempts and punishes humans to be wicked. Evil is a mix of powerful evil being and the weakness of humans.

## 3 aims of punishment

**Retribution:** is the least positive of the 3 aims of punishment. It means that society, on behalf of the victim, is getting its own back on the offender. In the Old Testament it is referred to as *lex talionis* (the law of retaliation). **"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"**

**Deterrence:** This is the belief that if offenders are seen to be punished for wrongdoing, then this may 'put off' others from committing that offence. The offender themselves might also be put off from reoffending.

**Reformation:** This is the aim of punishment most Christians prefer because it seeks to help offenders by working with them to help them understand that their behaviour is harming society. It is hoped that offenders will change their attitudes and become responsible, law-abiding members of the community.

# Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment

## Reasons for crime & types of crime

**Causes** of crime include: *upbringing, mental illness, poverty, opposition to existing laws, greed/hate, or addiction.*

There are 3 key **types** of crimes: *Crimes against the **person** (e.g. murder); Crimes against **property** (e.g. burglary); Crimes against the **state** (e.g. terrorism).*

*St Paul tells Christians to "obey the laws of the land"*

## Suffering

For many people, suffering is an unfortunate part of living. It may be caused by something natural, such as an illness, or it may be due to how people have behaved. Whatever the cause, Christians believe they should try to help others who are suffering. Christians feel that they should follow the example of Jesus, who helped many whom he saw were suffering, and who taught that those who believe in God should help those who suffer.

**Heller Keller** was a Christian writer and activist who became deaf and blind when she was only 19 months old. She said *"We are never really happy until we try to brighten the lives of others"*.

## Treatment of criminals

Christians do not disagree with discipline. They see a positive need for it: **"He who spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them"**. However, they may question the method used since Jesus' teachings on love and caring for people rule out any physical punishment. Instead, Christians focus on positive sanctions that help offenders to realise the error of their ways and reform. Jesus always treated people with respect, and Christians believe they should follow his example.

**Corporal punishment:** to punish the offender by causing physical pain. It is illegal in the UK but allowed in some other parts of the world. For example some Muslim countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, allow caning as punishment for offences such as gambling and sexual promiscuity.

**Community service:** offers offenders a chance to make up for what they have done and receive help in reforming their behaviour. Christians are in general agreement that it is a suitable punishment for fairly minor offences.

## The death penalty

**Abolished in the UK in 1965 and is now illegal in many EU countries.**

**The Principle of Utility** = an action is right if it promotes the maximum happiness for the maximum number of people.

**The sanctity of life** = God gave life, so only He has the right to take it away.

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It is a justifiable retribution for serious crimes</li><li>It is a deterrent</li><li>It gives the victim's family a sense of justice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Only God has the right to take life</li><li>Jesus taught a message of love and forgiveness</li><li>It is hypocritical</li></ul>

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a core Christian belief and one Jesus emphasised in his teachings.

Christians are expected to be forgiving towards those who wrong them, if they expect to be forgiven themselves: **"Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us"**.

Many Christians would argue that forgiveness is not a replacement for punishment.

During his ministry Jesus was asked how many times you should forgive someone who wrongs you and he replied **"I tell you not seven times, but seventy-seven times"**

**"Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith"**