

Christianity - Beliefs and Practices

Ascension - Going or being taken up; the event forty days after the resurrection when Jesus returned to glory in heaven.

Atonement - Making amends or payment for a wrong. The belief that reconciliation between God and humanity that was brought about by the death of Jesus as a sacrifice.

Baptism - The sacrament through which people become members of the Church. It involves the use of water as a symbol of the washing away of sin.

Believers' baptism - Initiation into the Church, by immersion in water, of people old enough to understand the ceremony/rite and who have made the decision to live a Christian life.

Bible - Source of wisdom and authority; a holy book containing both the Old and New Testaments.

Catholic - The tradition within the Christian Church which is led by the Pope; also called the Roman Catholic Church. (Note: The term 'catholic' refers to the communion of all Christians, the universal Church, although it is not a term included on this specification).

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) - A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

Christ - Literally means 'Anointed One' in Greek; the Hebrew equivalent is Messiah. The leader promised by God to the Jews; Christians believe Jesus to be the Christ.

Christian Aid - A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

Christmas - The festival/celebration to remember the birth of Jesus.

Church - The People of God/Body of Christ, among whom Christ is beloved to be present and active. It could also mean members of a particular Christian denomination/tradition, eg Roman Catholic, Methodist. Finally, it could also mean the building in which Christians worship.

Creation - Bringing the world into existence; the belief that the world is God's loving creation.

Crucifixion - The death of Jesus; a form of the death penalty used by the Romans.

Easter - Festival/celebration of the resurrection of Jesus; the Easter season ends with Pentecost (50 days after Easter Sunday) which remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit to earth following the ascension.

Eucharist/Holy Communion - Literally 'thanksgiving'; a sacrament in which the death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated, using bread and wine.

Evangelism - Preaching the gospel (the good news about God) to convert people to the Christian faith.

Evil - The opposite of good; a cause of suffering and against the will of God.

The Father - The first Person of the Trinity, the belief in God as creator and sustainer of the universe.

Food banks - Places in local communities where people in need can go to collect food; often run/supported by local churches and religious charities.

Grace - The unconditional and generous love that God shows to people who do not deserve it.

Heaven - Belief that after death Christians can enter a state of being with God for eternity.

Hell - Belief in a place of eternal suffering, or a state after death of being in separation from God.

Holy Spirit - The third Person of the Trinity; believed to be present with believers since Pentecost and active on earth.

Incarnation - Literally 'in flesh', or 'enfleshed'; belief that God took on human form in the person of Jesus.

Infant baptism - Sacrament of initiation of babies and young children into the Church.

Informal prayer - Spontaneous prayers spoken from the heart which are personal and unique to the person/people at the time.

Iona - Place of pilgrimage founded by St Columba in the fourth century.

Jesus - Believed by Christians to be the Son of God, he was a first century Jewish teacher living and travelling in Palestine/Israel.

Judgement - The belief that God will decide whether each person should receive eternal life or eternal punishment based on their earthly life.

Just - Fair or equal treatment, a state of justice. Belief about the nature of God as treating all people justly.

Liturgical worship - A church service which follows a set structure or ritual.

Law - Rules or commands which must be followed; the law of God is revealed in the Bible.

Lourdes - Place of pilgrimage where the Virgin Mary appeared to St Bernadette in a series of visions and it is claimed that miraculous healings have taken place.

Lord's Prayer - The prayer taught to the disciples by Jesus; also known as the 'Our Father' and widely said by Christians in both church services and privately.

Mission - Literally 'sent out'; the duty of Christians to spread the gospel (the good news about Jesus).

Non-liturgical worship/informal worship - A service which does not follow a set text or ritual; sometimes spontaneous or charismatic.

Omnipotent - The belief that God is 'all powerful'.

The Oneness of God - The belief that God is one singular divine being (who can be manifest in the Three Persons of the Trinity).

Original sin - Belief human nature is flawed, and that we all have the tendency to sin; traditional belief held by some Christians that this came from Adam & Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit as recorded in Genesis 3.

Orthodox - A denomination/tradition of the Church popular in some parts of Eastern Europe. There are two main Orthodox Churches – Greek and Russian.

Persecution - Facing hostility and ill-treatment; some Christians face punishment and death for practising their faith.

Pilgrimage - A religious journey to a holy site/sacred place, it is an act of worship and devotion.

Prayer - Communicating with God through words of praise, thanksgiving or confession, or requests for his help or guidance; listening to and speaking to God.

Private worship - A believer giving God praise and worship on their own.

Protestant - Christian denominations in which authority is generally based on the Bible, rather than Church tradition/teaching. (eg Anglican, Methodist, Baptist).

Reconciliation - Making up and rebuilding relationships between two groups/sides after disagreement.

Resurrection - Being raised from the dead; the event three days after the crucifixion when it is believed that God raised Jesus from the dead. It could also mean the form that many Christians believe the afterlife will take, referring to either physical or spiritual bodies.

Sacrament - The outward and visible sign of an invisible and spiritual grace. (eg Baptism and the Eucharist are recognised as sacraments by most Christians).

Salvation - Being saved; belief that through God's grace, Jesus' death and resurrection brought about salvation for humanity. Saving of the soul and being able to enter eternal life in heaven.

Set prayers - These are prayers written throughout the centuries which many Christians worldwide use (eg The Lord's Prayer).

Sin - Behaviour which is against God's laws and wishes/against Christian principles of morality.

The Son - The second Person of the Trinity; Jesus believed to be God incarnate.

Son of God - A title used for Jesus; the second Person of the Trinity. Shows the special relationship between Jesus and God.

Street pastors - A Christian organisation involving people working, mainly at night, on city streets giving care to those who need it.

Suffering - An effect of evil; undergoing pain and hardship.

Tearfund - A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

Trinity - The belief that God as One includes God also being manifest in three Persons: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Word - In the Bible, John 1 describes God creating the world through his eternal Word. This links the eternal Word to Jesus in the statement: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Worship - Showing adoration and reverence; offering praise to God.

Islam - Beliefs and Practices

Ablution (wudu) - Ritual washing before prayer.

Adalat/justice - Part of the nature of God in Shi'a Islam; the belief that God is fair.

Adam - One of the prophets of Allah. The father of humankind; built the Ka'aba.

Akhirah (life after death) - Belief in a new stage of life after death.

Angels - They are spiritual beings created from elements of light. They gave God's messages to the prophets and watch over humans.

Arafat - Part of the Hajj pilgrimage. Place where Prophet Muhammad preached his last sermon and pilgrims gather to pray.

Ashura - Important festival in Shi'a Islam, to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein (Muhammad's grandson). Sunni Muslims observe Ashura as a day of repentance for sins in the belief that they will be forgiven.

Authority - Having power and status. The Qur'an has supreme authority as the word of Allah, this means it must be believed and obeyed.

Beneficence - Literally 'doing good'. One of the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah and belief about his nature, the generosity that Allah shows to humans.

Day of Judgement - The day when Allah will decide about individual deeds and on reward or punishment.

Fairness - Belief about the nature of God; refers to Allah's justice. He treats all humans equally and as they deserve.

Fasting - Not eating or drinking; one of the Five Pillars is Sawm during Ramadan.

The Five Pillars - Important duties for Sunni Muslims which support the main principles of Islam. Shahadah, salah, zakah, sawm and hajj.

The five roots of Usul ad-Din - The foundations of the faith in Shi'a Islam; five key beliefs: Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Adalat (justice), prophethood, imamate, resurrection.

Friday prayer/Jumma - Friday prayers in the mosque, where a sermon (khutbah) is heard.

Giving alms - Giving alms means giving to those in need, eg money, food, time. A key practice in Islam; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts (Zakah).

The Gospel - Holy book /source of authority; literally 'good news' and it is the good news about Isa (Jesus), who was a prophet of Islam.

Greater jihad - The personal struggle of every Muslim to live by the teachings of their faith.

Hajj - One of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts; pilgrimage to Makkah, which all Muslims must undertake at least once in their lives, unless prevented by problems over wealth or health.

Heaven - Referred to as Paradise; Allah's reward after death to those who have been faithful to him and who have repented of their sins.

Hell - It is a place of great suffering after death for those who have rejected the Qur'an's teachings and have led a wicked life. For some it will last forever.

Human accountability - The belief that everyone must take responsibility for their actions and will be questioned about them on the Day of Judgement.

Human freedom - Humans have control over their thoughts, feelings and actions.

Human responsibility - Humans are responsible for most of what they do because they have free will and so will be accountable on the Day of Judgement.

Ibrahim - One of the prophets of Allah. He rebuilt the Ka'aba.

Id-ul-Adha - Festival; celebration of the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son for Allah.

Id-ul-Fitr - Festival; celebration that comes at the end of Ramadan and marks the end of fasting.

The Imamate - One of the Five Roots of Usul-ad-Din, 'Leadership.' Shia belief in the twelve imams who succeeded Muhammad as the leaders of Islam.

Immanence - The belief that God is close to humanity and involved in the world.

Jibril - Angel who dictated the Qur'an to Muhammad; on Judgement Day he will assist with the weighing of a person's deeds.

Jihad - 'To struggle'. The personal or collective struggle against evil.

The Ka'aba - Part of the Hajj pilgrimage; cube-shaped building in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Makkah. All Muslims face towards it when they pray.

Khums - One of the Ten Obligatory Acts in Shi'a Islam; practice of alms giving.

Lesser jihad - This refers to the military struggle to defend Islam. It is carried out according to strict and clear cut rules.

Makkah - Place of pilgrimage during Hajj; the spiritual centre of Islam.

Mercy - Belief about the nature of God and one of Allah's 99 Beautiful Names; God's willingness to forgive the sins of those who repent.

Mika'il - Angel who gives spiritual and material help to humans; on Judgement Day he will assist with the weighing of a person's deeds.

Mina - Site of pilgrimage during Hajj; where pilgrims take part in the stoning of pillars.

Mosque - Muslim place of worship.

Movements (rak'ahs) - Actions and ritual movements made during salah (prayer) consisting of recitations, standing, bowing and prostration.

Muzdalifah - Site of pilgrimage during Hajj; where pilgrims hold a night prayer and rest after the Stand on Mount Arafat.

Muhammad - The last of the prophets. He received the Qur'an and his Sunnah and Hadiths are also important sources of authority.

The Night of Power - The night on which Muhammad received the first revelations of the Qur'an.

Omnipotence - All-powerful; belief about the nature of God and one of the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah.

Pilgrimage - A religious journey to a holy site/sacred place, it is an act of worship and devotion.

Predestination - One of the Six Articles of Faith in Sunni Islam; the belief that everything that happens has been decided already by Allah.

The Psalms - Holy book/source of authority; sacred prayers and poems written by King Dawud (David), a prophet of Allah.

The Qur'an - Holy Book and most important source of authority in Islam. It was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and is the final revelation of God to humankind.

Ramadan - Month during which Muslims fast (sawm) from dawn to sunset.

Recitations - Part of the practice of salah (prayer); the reciting of verses from the Qur'an.

Resurrection - One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; belief that after death, all people will be raised from the dead to face judgement.

Revelation - When God is revealed to humans; belief that Allah shows his nature and will through the words of the Qur'an.

Risalah (Prophethood) - One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; belief in the prophets as messengers sent by God to communicate to people.

Salah - Prayer; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts.

Sawm - Fasting from dawn to dusk during Ramadan; one of the Five Pillars/Ten Obligatory Acts.

The Scrolls of Abraham - Holy book/source of authority; individual revelations to Ibrahim that were written on parchment but have perished.

The Shahadah - Muslim declaration of faith; one of the Five Pillars in Sunni Islam.

Shi'a Islam - Muslims who believe in the Imamate, successorship of Ali.

Six articles of faith - The foundations of the faith in Sunni Islam; six key beliefs: Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Angels, Holy Books, Prophethood, Akhirah, Predestination.

Sunni Islam - Muslims who believe in the successorship of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.

Tawhid (the Oneness of God) - One of the Six Articles of Faith and Five Roots of Usul ad-Din; the oneness and unity of Allah.

The Ten Obligatory Acts - These are requirements for Shi'a Muslims. They include salah, sawm, zakah, hajj and jihad (duties also for Sunni Muslims) but the final five are not part of the Sunni tradition – khums, encouraging good, discouraging wrong, showing love for God and people, disassociation with enemies of God.

The Torah - Holy book/source of authority; given by God to the prophet Musa (Moses) on Mount Sinai.

Zakah - One of the Five Pillars and Ten Obligatory Acts; giving alms.

Theme A - Relationships and Families

Adultery - Having sexual relationship with someone other than your married partner.

Cohabitation - A couple living together without being married/in civil partnership.

Compassion - Sympathy and concern for the suffering of others.

Contraception - Precautions taken to prevent pregnancy *and to protect against contracting or transmitting STIs* (sexually transmitted infections).

Divorce - Legal ending of a marriage.

Extended family - Family unit comprising two parents and their children, but also grandparents, cousins etc.

Family planning - Planning when to have a family and how big a family to have by use of birth control practices and/or contraception.

Gender discrimination - Acting on prejudices against someone because of their gender.

Gender equality - Belief that all genders have equal status and value, so discrimination against any is wrong.

Gender prejudice - Negative thoughts, feelings or beliefs about a person or group based on their gender.

Heterosexuality - Being physically/sexually attracted to persons of the opposite gender.

Homosexuality - Being physically/sexually attracted to persons of the same gender.

Nuclear family - Family unit made up of two parents and their child(ren).

Polygamy - The practice of having multiple spouses (wives and/or husbands).

Procreation - Having a child; seen as a duty in many religions.

Promiscuity - Having lots of sexual relationships without commitment.

Remarriage - Marriage for the second time, after divorce ending an earlier marriage.

Vows - Promises made during a marriage ceremony.

Theme B - Religion and Life

Abortion - The deliberate ending of a pregnancy.

Afterlife - Beliefs about what happens to 'us' after our body has died; in many religions this relates to life after death or immortality in some form.

Animal experimentation - The use of animals for medical research and product testing.

Awe and Wonder - Sense of wonderment at nature; often linked to the feeling that God is involved/revealed through it.

Big Bang Theory - Scientific theory about the origins of the universe; belief that the universe began almost 14 billion years ago with a reaction of particles from a singularity followed by a process of inflation and expansion.

Death - The end of the physical, bodily life.

Dominion - Belief that humans have been given control/charge of the world.

Environment - The world around us; this can be made up natural or artificial surroundings.

Euthanasia - Assisting with the ending of life for a person who is terminally ill or has degenerative illness; often known as assisted suicide.

Evolution - Scientific theory of the development of species which involves a process of natural selection and survival of the fittest.

Natural resources - Resources which are found in nature – fossil fuels (eg coal, oil, natural gas), plants etc.

Pollution - Contamination of an environment with harmful substances.

Quality of life - The standard of health, comfort and happiness/fulfilment experienced by a person or group.

Responsibility - Having a duty or obligation to act in a certain way.

Sanctity of life - Belief that life is sacred/special because it was created by God, or because we are each unique individuals.

Scientific - Knowledge based on what can be observed (eg regularities in nature) and experimentation.

Stewardship - Duty given by God to humankind to look after the created world, and all life within it.

Theme D - Religion, Peace and Conflict

Conflict - Dispute between sides, individuals, groups or nations.

Forgiveness - Letting go of blame against a person for wrongs they have done; moving on.

Holy War - War that is believed to be sanctioned by God.

Justice - Bringing fairness back to a situation.

Just War - Set of rules for fighting a war in a way believed to be justified and acceptable to God.

Nuclear deterrence - Having nuclear weapons with the aim of deterring/preventing other states attacking for fear of retaliation and nuclear war (possibly leading to Mutually Assured Destruction).

Nuclear weapons/war - A weapon of mass destruction which causes widespread damage and loss of life. Nuclear war would be a war fought using these weapons.

Pacifism - Belief that all violence is wrong, which then affects all behaviours.

Peace - The opposite of war; harmony between all in society.

Peace-making - Working to bring about peace and reconciliation.

Protest - A statement or action to express disagreement; can be an organised event to demonstrate disagreement with a policy or political action.

Reconciliation - Making up and rebuilding relationships between two groups/sides after disagreement.

Retaliation - To pay someone back for their harmful actions.

Terrorism - Use of violence and threats to intimidate others; used for political purposes to build fear in the ordinary population and to secure demands from a government.

Victims of war - Those who are harmed during a war, for example those killed, injured or left homeless.

Violence - Behaviour involving physical force which intends to hurt, kill or cause damage.

War - Armed conflict between two or more sides.

Weapons of Mass Destruction - Weapons which cause widespread, indiscriminate damage (eg nuclear, chemical, biological).

Theme E - Religion, Crime and Punishment

Addiction - Being addicted to/dependent on a particular substance; can be a cause of crime (eg stealing money to pay for illegal drugs).

Community service - Punishment involving the criminal doing a set number of hours of physical labour/work in their local community.

Corporal punishment - Punishment in which physical pain is inflicted on the criminal.

Crime - Action which breaks the law; can be against the person (eg murder), against property (eg vandalism), or against the state (eg treason).

Death penalty - Capital punishment; the execution of a criminal which is sanctioned by the state.

Deterrence - Aim of punishment; the threat of punishment as a way to put a person off committing crime (eg knowing they could go to prison if they steal).

Evil intentions - Having the desire to deliberately cause suffering or harm to another.

Forgiveness - Letting go of blame against a person for wrongs they have done; moving on.

Greed - Reason for committing crime – wanting or desiring something or more of something.

Hate crime - A crime committed because of prejudice views about a person or group.

Prison - Imprisonment is a form of punishment where a criminal is locked in a secure guarded building (prison) for a period of time.

Law - The rules a country demands its citizens follow, the breaking of which leads to punishment.

Mental illness - A medical condition that can cause changes to a person's behaviour; can be a cause of crime.

Murder - Unlawfully killing another person.

Poverty - The state of being without the things needed for a reasonable quality of life; can be a cause of crime.

Principle of utility - The concept of acting out of the greater good for the most people. (eg removing a dangerous criminal from society in order to protect others).

Reformation - Aim of punishment; helping the criminal see how and why their behaviour was wrong, so that their mindset changes for the better.

Retribution - Aim of punishment; getting the criminal back for their crimes.

Sanctity of life - Belief that life is sacred/special because it was created by God, or because we are each unique individuals.

Theft - Taking something without the owner's consent.

Unjust law - A legal requirement within a society that is believed to be unfair; a cause of crime if a person believes they cannot follow (or must act against) a law they believe is unjust.

Upbringing - The environment a child lives in, and the instructions they receive, while they are growing up; can be a cause of crime.