



Christian beliefs and Practices

Philosophy and ethics from a Christian perspective



GCSE - Year 10

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISERS

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER: CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

The nature of God	Omnipotent – All powerful. Can do anything.
	Loving – God loves us like a father.
	Just – God is the ultimate judge because he knows everything and is loving
Problem of evil	If God is loving He must want to stop evil and suffering. If God is omnipotent then He is able to stop evil and suffering. However, evil and suffering still exist.
The Trinity	Most Christians believe that there are three persons in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit . Each of these is wholly God but they are not the same. Some Christians do not believe this.
Different Christian beliefs about creation	All Christians believe that God is the creator of the universe and that the universe he created was good .
	Fundamentalist Christians believe that the world was created by God in six days, literally as described in the book of Genesis because it is written in the Bible “All scripture is God breathed.”
	Liberal Christians believe that the Genesis account is not literally true . They believe it is an allegory with a message that God is the creator and Lord of the universe.
Role of the Word	During creation the Word “was with God and was God” and creation was done through the Word . Christians believe this shows the role of Jesus in creation.
Role of the Spirit	Before creation, the Spirit of God “hovered over the waters.” This refers to the role of the Holy Spirit in creation.
Christian beliefs about the afterlife	Judgement – All Christians believe that after death they will be judged by God.
	Particular Judgement – Some Christians believe that they will be judged immediately after they die because Jesus said to the thief “today you will be with me in paradise.”
	General Judgement – Some Christians believe that they will not be judged until they are resurrected at the end of the world and judged by Jesus, as described in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats .
	Resurrection – Most Christians believe that they will be resurrected on Judgement Day
	Heaven – Heaven is a place where God is and where the saved will be happy for ever
	Hell – Hell is a place of eternal suffering . Some Christians don’t believe that a loving God would condemn people to hell for eternity.
	Purgatory – A place where, according to Roman Catholics, the soul is purified before it goes to heaven.
The incarnation	Incarnation means ‘ God made flesh .’ Most Christians believe that God became human in the form of Jesus. The term ‘ Son of God ’ is used to express this relationship.
The death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus	Crucifixion – Jesus was scourged and crucified. As he died, he asked God to forgive his murderers.
	Resurrection – Christians believe that three days after he died, Jesus rose from the dead and was seen by various followers and disciples.
	Ascension – Christians believe that forty days after the resurrection, Jesus rose into heaven to be with God until judgement day.
Sin	Sin means to break God’s laws. According to the Bible “all have sinned and fallen short” and “the wages of sin are death.”
	The original sin was Eve eating the forbidden fruit, which caused Adam and Eve to be banished from the Garden of Eden and into a world of suffering. This event is known as The Fall .
The role of Christ in salvation	Christians believe that Christ’s sacrifice was an act of atonement that paid the penalty for our sins and meant that all can be saved.
Salvation	Salvation means to be saved from the consequences of sin. There are three main beliefs about how this comes about, grace, law and spirit
	Grace – this is the belief that salvation is a gift from God that is unearned and undeserved
	Law – this is the belief that salvation is earned by using our free will to choose to follow the laws of God as described in the parable of the sheep and the goats .
	Spirit – Christians believe that after Christ’s ascension, God remains on earth in the form of the Holy Spirit which plays an important role in salvation. It motivates people to become Christian and helps them to understand the faith.

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – CHRISTIAN PRACTICES

worship	Worship: Act of religious praise and devotion. Honouring God.
	Liturgical worship: Church service that follows a set order and structure .
	Non-liturgical worship: A service that doesn't have a set order or structure.
	Informal worship: Type of non-liturgical worship that is spontaneous e.g. Quaker and charismatic Christian worship
	Private worship: When a person worships God by themselves
Prayer	Prayer: Speaking to God
	Set prayers: Prayers that are written down and used by many Christians
	The Lord's Prayer: Set prayer taught by Jesus aka the ' Our Father '
	Informal prayer: Made up by a person using their own words
sacraments	Christian rituals where believers receive God's grace (free gift of love). Roman Catholics practice seven sacraments, most churches practice two while others don't practice any.
baptism	Baptism: Christian sacrament representing entrance into the Christian faith. Usually involves water.
	Infant baptism: Aka christening. Some Christians (e.g. Catholics) baptise infant baptism by pouring water on a baby's forehead. They believe this removes original sin and means the baby can now enter heaven .
	Believers' baptism: Other Christians (e.g. Baptists) practice believer's baptism by immersing an adult into a pool of water. They believe that a person should be old enough to choose for themselves.
Eucharist	Aka Holy Communion . Christian sacrament that uses bread and wine to re-enact the Last Supper and commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ .
	Some Christians (e.g. Catholics) believe that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Jesus. This is because Jesus said "This is my body."
	Other Christians (e.g. Protestants) believe that the bread and wine are symbols of Christ's sacrifice.
celebrating the Eucharist	In some churches (e.g. Roman Catholic) people come to the front to receive communion from the priest, usually in the form of a wafer and some alcoholic wine from a single cup
	In other churches (e.g. non-conformist) bread is usually set on a table alongside non-alcoholic wine in small cups and anyone who wishes to can take some.
pilgrimage	Pilgrimage: A journey made to a holy site for religious reasons.
	Lourdes: Site of Catholic pilgrimage in France where St Bernadette is believed to have seen visions of the Virgin Mary. Pilgrims go there for physical and spiritual healing .
	Iona: Scottish island where Christians of all denominations go to pray, read the Bible and meditate .
Christmas	Christian festival celebrating the incarnation of Jesus . Christians light candles, attend Midnight Mass and give each other cards and presents.
Easter	The most important Christian festival as it commemorates the death and resurrection of Christ . Christians attend mass, pray and light candles. Flowers and eggs are given to symbolise new life.
food banks	The Trussell Trust is a Christian charity that provides emergency food to people in crisis .
street pastors	Street pastors are a group of Christian volunteers who provide free help and support to people , especially those who are out on a Friday or Saturday night.
Tearfund	Provides aid and support to people in poverty.
mission	A vocation or calling to spread the teachings of Jesus.
evangelism	Spreading the teachings of Jesus (e.g. the Alpha Course).
Church growth	Church attendance is falling in the UK, but is increasing rapidly in places like Africa .

reconciliation	The worldwide Church has a mission to heal people's relationship with God and with one another . They do this through initiatives such as the Irish Churches Peace Project that aim to develop peace and understanding.
persecution	Christians in places like North Korea and Syria are being persecuted by being attacked, forced to pay extra taxes or forbidden from certain jobs . The worldwide church responds to this by smuggling Bibles, sending money and encouraging Christians to show love and forgiveness .

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – THEME A ‘RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILIES’

Contraception	Roman Catholics believe that artificial contraception goes against natural law and God’s plan when he instructed Adam and Eve to ‘be fruitful and multiply’ . They say that all sex should be ‘open to creating new life.’
	Most other Christians accept contraception, although some are opposed to the morning after pill as they see it as a form of murder and against the commandment ‘You shall not murder’
Sexual relationships before marriage	Most Christians are opposed to sex before marriage as they believe it is God’s plan for a man and woman to have sex within a sexual relationship when they are ‘one flesh.’
	Some liberal Christians would argue that in these modern times it is archaic to not live together before marriage and have sex. They would argue it can help a couple to ensure they want to be together in a permanent marriage arrangement.
Homosexual relationships	The Roman Catholic Church teaches that homosexual sex is a sinful activity because the purpose of sex is to create children (‘be fruitful and multiply’) and also because it is written in the Bible ‘You shall not lie with a man as with a woman.’
	The Church of England accepts homosexual relationships but homosexuals cannot be married in a church.
Adultery	Christians are against adultery as it breaks the marriage vows and goes against the commandment ‘You shall not commit adultery.’
The nature and purpose of marriage	Christians believe that marriage is a part of God’s plan for humanity, that it takes place between a man and a woman and should be for life.
	Its purpose is to provide a loving relationship in which to enjoy sex, provide safety and stability for children and to educate children in the Christian faith
Divorce, including reasons for divorce, and remarrying	People get divorced for a number of reasons including adultery, work and money pressures, domestic violence and addiction.
	Roman Catholics believe that marriage is a sacrament and that a man and wife are ‘one flesh’ until one of them dies. Catholics can separate but cannot remarry while their partner is alive.
	1. Other Christians believe that divorce is the lesser of two evils and should sometimes be allowed out of love and compassion for a couple.
	Jesus said “Anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.”
The role of parents and children in a family	Christians believe that parents have a duty to provide their children with a safe and stable environment and educate them in the Christian faith
	Christians believe that children have a duty to respect and obey their parents.
Family types and family issues	Nuclear family: A mother, father and children
	Extended family: Includes grandparents and other relatives
	Same sex parents: When a homosexual couple raise children together. Some Christians do not approve of this as they believe that a child should have a mother and a father. Other Christians believe it is more important for them to have a safe and loving family, whatever the gender of the parents.
	Polygamous family: When a man has more than one wife. Christians believe this goes against God’s plan for marriage to be between one man and one woman.
The purpose of families	Christians believe that families are for procreation, stability and the protection of children and educating children in a faith.
	Christians believe that men and women are made in “God’s image” and are therefore equal

The roles of men and women	Also, Paul wrote in the Bible “There is no Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
	Some Christians believe that women were created to be men’s “helper” and so should have different roles
Gender prejudice and discrimination	Gender prejudice is holding biased opinions about someone based on their gender. For example, thinking that men are better at politics while women are better at cleaning
	Gender discrimination is acting against someone because of their gender. For example, not employing someone because she is a woman.

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – THEME B ‘RELIGION AND LIFE’

Sanctity of life	The belief that human life is sacred because we are made in God’s “ image. ”
Quality of life	How good or comfortable a person’s life is
Abortion	Roman Catholics are opposed to abortion in all circumstances because they believe that life begins at conception and therefore abortion is murder and against the commandment “ You shall not murder. ” It also violates the sanctity of life.
	The Church of England believes that abortion is sometimes the lesser of two evils because Jesus taught “ love your neighbour. ” Examples might include cases of rape or incest.
Euthanasia	Roman Catholics are opposed to euthanasia in all circumstances as it goes against the sanctity of life and interferes with God’s plan for a person.
	Some other Christians will sometimes accept euthanasia if it is the most loving thing to do because Jesus taught to “ love your neighbour. ”
The use of animals for food	Most Christians believe that God gave humans animals for food and so have no problem with using animals for food..
Religious teachings about the origins of the universe	Christians believe that God created the universe from nothing. The creation story in Genesis describes how God made the universe in six days
The relationship between scientific views and religious views	Fundamentalist Christians believe that the universe was created in exactly the way it is described in Genesis and therefore other accounts (i.e. the Big Bang theory) are wrong
	Liberal Christians believe that the Genesis account is not literally true. They believe it is an allegory with a message that God is the creator and Lord of the universe.
Stewardship	The belief that the earth is God’s and we have a responsibility to look after it. A Bible quote to support this view is “ The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. ”
Dominion	The belief that humans have been given the earth to rule over. A Bible quote to support this view is “ Rule over...every living creature. ”
Awe	Sense of wonder at the universe, often linked to the thought that God is involved in it.
The use and abuse of the environment	Most Christians believe that God gave humans the responsibility to care for the earth (stewardship), to preserve its natural resources and to avoid pollution.
	In the past, some Christians have interpreted the teaching of dominion (rule) over the earth to mean they could do whatever they want to it, but few believe that today.
Religious teachings about the origins of human life	The Genesis account is that God created Adam from “ the dust of the ground ” and breathed into his nostrils the “ breath of life. ” Later, God created Eve from Adam’s “ rib. ” Fundamentalist Christians believe that this account is literally true. Liberal Christians believe it is an allegory and that evolution was the ‘tool’ that God used to create humanity.
Beliefs about death and an afterlife and the value of human life	Christians believe that after death they will be judged by God and spend eternity in heaven or hell. Roman Catholics also believe in purgatory. Because of these beliefs, Christians believe that human life is ultimately more important than other forms of life on earth (e.g. animals and plants) as it is immortal.

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – THEME D ‘RELIGION, PEACE AND CONFLICT’

Violence and terrorism	Most Christians believe that violence is wrong because of the teaching of Jesus to “ love your enemies ” and “ turn the other cheek. ”
	Some Christians will accept violence against property in extreme cases because Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple
	Some Christians will accept violence in the case of a Just War .
Pacifism	Pacifism is the belief that war is always wrong.
	Some Christians, such as Quakers , strongly support pacifism because they believe that Jesus taught pacifism when he said things like “ Blessed are the peacemakers ” and “ love your enemies. ”
	Many Christians are not pacifists because they believe war is sometimes justified (just war)
Peace	Peace is the absence of war and conflict, but also a feeling of calmness and happiness. Christians believe that God will restore peace to the world on Judgement Day .
Justice	Justice means bringing about what is right or fair. Christians believe that God is the ultimate judge .
Forgiveness	Forgiveness means giving up your anger or resentment towards someone who has wronged you. Jesus said we should forgive “ seventy times seven ” times.
Reconciliation	Reconciliation means restoring friendly relationships after a conflict. Jesus taught about the importance of reconciliation in the Parable of the Prodigal Son .
Reasons for war	There are many reasons why people go to war, including greed, self-defence and retaliation .
Just War Theory	Just war theory is the Christian theory that war is sometimes acceptable . There are conditions a war must meet to be considered ‘just’, for example: Worthy cause – such as self-defence or defending the innocent Authority – Must be declared by the government or rulers Resort – It must be a last resort Innocents – Innocents should not be targeted Success – It must have a reasonable chance of success
Holy war	A holy war is a war fought for a religious cause , such as defending your religion. Most Christians today do not support holy war and prefer to defend their religion with words.
Organisations that respond to war	Cafod is a Catholic charity that provided food and shelter to refugees fleeing the Syrian war.
	Tear fund is a Christian charity that works with war torn areas of the world.