

GCSE Religious Studies Christianity Knowledge Organiser

Christian practices – Church

Key concepts

omnibenevolence	incarnation
omnipotence	resurrection
omniscience	agapé
Holy Spirit	atonement
Messiah	divine command
Trinity	inter-faith dialogue

Past exam questions

- Describe the role of the church in the local community. [5] SAMs
- “Prayer is the most important activity for Christians.” [15] 2018
- “The most important thing for Christians to do is to work for a better world.” [15] 2019

Links with unit 2

Christianity – life’s journey: baptism, eucharist/communion, confirmation, religious wedding.

Christianity – special places.

Issues of Human Rights – human rights and social justice, issues of wealth and poverty.

Diversity of Christianity	Christianity is split into different groups (denominations). Although they all believe that Jesus is the Son of God, each group will stress different teachings and have different ways of showing their beliefs. The Catholic Church follow the authority of the Pope. The Church in Wales is part of the Anglican church, a Protestant group. Other Protestant groups include Baptists , Methodists , and Presbyterians – they are called non-conformist as they refused to confirm to the teachings of the Anglican Church.
Role of the local church	A church or chapel is a place of worship – a place where Christians can go to pray and take part in religious services that mark baptism , confirmation , marriage , and funerals . Lots of other activities take place in a church/chapel such as coffee mornings, creches, Cubs & Brownies, emergency shelters, community events and Bible study classes. Christians believe that the Church has a role in social issues concerned with homelessness and hunger, and they may be centres for food banks . The Salvation Army is a Christian group that works with the homeless and tries to help those living in poverty. Shelter Cymru aims to improve the lives of homeless people through practical advice and support services.
Features of churches and chapels	Traditionally, churches were built in the shape of a cross. The objects inside Catholic and Anglican churches are usually similar, although Anglican churches are usually decorated in a less ornate way. The main features in both are the altar (the table from which Christians receive bread and wine), font (a basin that holds water used for baptism), pulpit (a raised platform from where the priest delivers his sermon/teaching) and lectern (a reading desk that is used to read from the Bible). A Catholic church will also have statues, a confessional, and representations of the stations of the cross. Non-conformist chapels are usually much simpler in design. The focal point of a chapel is the pulpit or lectern as the reading of the Bible is the most important part of a service. There is also a communion table (altar).
Different ways to worship	Liturgical worship (usually Catholic/Anglican) is when services follow a set pattern, often from a service book. The priest leads the congregation in prayers that have set responses, Bible passages are read, and hymns are sung. Eucharist/communion might be celebrated. Non-liturgical worship (non-conformist) does not have a set order but usually focus on Bible readings and a sermon. Quakers (the Society of Friends, a Christian group) worship in an informal way and may depend on unstructured prayers, or silence until someone feels that God tells them to speak.
Prayer	Prayer is a way for Christians to communicate with God. Jesus encouraged his followers to pray, setting out the Lord’s Prayer as an example of how to pray. Christians might pray on their own (private prayer) and speak directly to God. They can say what they want and express their deepest feelings. Jesus said to “ go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father ” (Matthew 6:6). Communal prayer is when Christians get together to pray; these prayers have structure and might be a way to connect with fellow believers as well as God. Informal prayers use everyday language while traditional prayers might be in a formal way.
Working for social justice	Christians try to put Jesus’ teachings to love one another into practice by promoting a fair society . Examples include Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu, challenging the injustices of segregation and apartheid. Tearfund provides emergency aid and long-term support to communities that have suffered natural disasters that might lead to discrimination and poverty. Churches also work to bring about reconciliation (understanding) between different Christian communities by remembering that they used to have “ everything in common ” (Acts 2:44). Churches also work with other groups from other religions (inter-faith dialogue).
Persecution	Examples of how Christians might be persecuted in the modern world might include: not being allowed to wear religious symbols; being treated unfairly when in a minority; being targeted by the Islamic State in the Middle East; bombings of churches in places such as Egypt and Sri Lanka; and police action against churches in China.