

BRADFORD CATHEDRAL



Education Department

GCSE RE:

Christianity Revision





THE TRINITY



Christians believe in one God, a belief known as **monotheism**.

Christians also believe that there are three “persons” or beings in the one God:

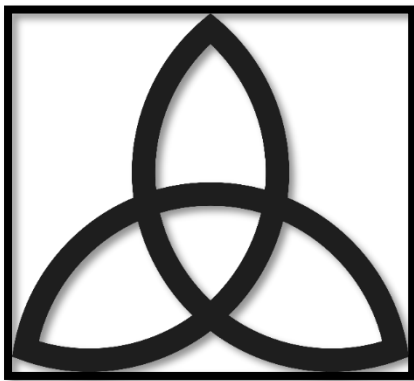
God the Father

God the Son

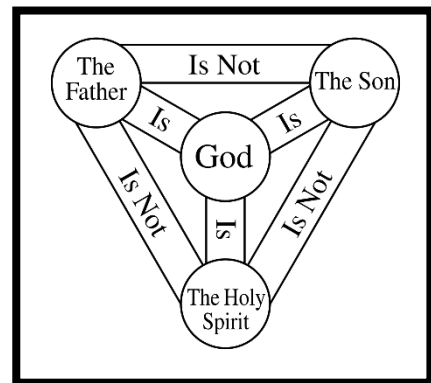
God the Holy Spirit

These are separate but are also one being: God

Common image of the Trinity



Helpful explanatory diagram



God the Father

- Believed to be the creator of the earth and all living things
- Believed to be all powerful: omnipotent
- Believed to be all knowing: omniscient
- Believed to be present everywhere: omnipresent



God the Son

- Became incarnate on earth through Jesus
- Believed by Christians to be fully human and also fully God



God the Holy Spirit

- Believed to be the unseen power of God at work in the world
- Often depicted as a dove, based on the account of the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus like a dove when he was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan.





JESUS



Christianity

A religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, as described in the New Testament of the Bible, who lived around 2000 years ago. It is recorded that Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, died by crucifixion and rose from the dead. Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the saviour of all people, whose coming as the Messiah- the promised saviour of the Jews- was prophesied in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Jesus Christ

Christians refer to Jesus as the Christ- from the Greek word “Christos” which means “anointed one”, which is a translation of the Hebrew word “mashiach” meaning “messiah”.

The Incarnation

Jesus is believed by Christians to be fully God, yet fully human. This is known as **the Incarnation:**

God taking human form.

We do not have all the historical details of Jesus’s birth and life, but for Christians the belief that Jesus is the Son of God is more important than the historical accuracy of all the details.

Christians believe that God’s greatest act of love was sending His Son, Jesus, to earth.

The Virgin Birth

The gospels of Matthew and Luke explain that Mary, Jesus’s mother, did not conceive Jesus sexually. In Matthew’s gospel it states: *“This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came to be together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.”*

Although the virgin conception is questioned by many, it is an important belief for many Christians as it provides evidence for them that Jesus is the incarnation- God showing Himself in human form.



Matthew 1:18 (NIV)

The Crucifixion

Christians particularly remember the Crucifixion on Good Friday. Jesus was sentenced to death by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. Crucifixion was a form of execution favoured by the Romans at that time.

Christians believe that God sent His only Son to earth and that by dying on the cross Jesus made up for the original sin committed by Adam and Eve that separated humanity from God, thus bringing humanity closer to God again.



The Resurrection

Resurrection means “rising from the dead”.

Christians celebrate Jesus’s resurrection on Easter Sunday.

The resurrection is recorded in all four gospels and is the **central belief of Christianity**.

It is further evidence that Jesus is God.

Christians believe that the Resurrection shows the power of good over evil.

Christians also believe that there is life after death.



Christians believe that through Jesus’s death and resurrection humans can receive forgiveness for sin, can become closer to God and gain eternal life.





SIN AND SALVATION



Sin

It is any action or thought that separates humans from God.

Christians believe that all humans commit sins, as no human is perfect.

Even holy people, such as the Christian saints, are imperfect and commit sins.

Saint Peter- after whom Bradford Cathedral is named- was a close friend of Jesus, but after Jesus was arrested he denied that he knew Him three times. Peter repented of his sin and went on to become one of the key figures in the early Church and is a major Christian saint.



Original sin

Many Christians believe in the idea of original sin. This belief or doctrine says that everyone is born with a natural tendency to do wrong. This belief goes back to the story of Adam and Eve: they lived in paradise- the Garden of Eden- but they sinned against God by going against God's instruction of not eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They, and all of humanity descended from them, therefore became separated from God through sin.

Salvation

For Christians, **salvation means being saved from sin and the consequences of it.**

It also means being granted eternal life with God.

Salvation through Jesus

As stated earlier, Christians believe that God sent His only Son to earth and that by dying on the cross Jesus made up for the original sin committed by Adam and Eve that separated humanity from God, thus bringing humanity closer to God again.

As God, Jesus could have avoided the pain and suffering He endured on the cross, but His death is seen by Christians as the **sacrifice** He made to deliver the world from sin.



The Book of Romans in the New Testament- believed to have been written by Saint Paul, around 25 years after Jesus was crucified, explains that **salvation is offered through the life and teaching of Jesus:**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"
Romans 6:23 (NIV)



Atonement

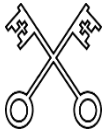
Atonement means the act of making amends for doing wrong.

Atonement, in a Christian context, **means restoring the relationship between humanity and God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.**

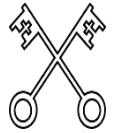
Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross in order to atone for the sins of the world.

Christians believe that this is why God came to earth in the form of Jesus.





HOLY COMMUNION



In a Holy Communion or Eucharist service Christians remember the last meal that Jesus had with His friends on the night before He died, in which He shared bread and wine with them. Jesus said that this should be done every time His followers met to remember Him.

According to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John Jesus said: "Take, eat, this is my body," "Take, drink, this is my blood," and "Do this in remembrance of me."

Christians share bread and wine to remember and give thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.



In his letter to the Corinthians Saint Paul also describes that:

"The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (NIV)

Communion takes place at and around the altar and this is the holiest part of a church. Worshippers look towards this place during a Communion service.



Different Christian denominations (groups) interpret the meaning of Holy Communion in different ways.

Catholics, Orthodox Christians and some Anglicans believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus, that Jesus is fully present in the bread and wine. This is known as **transubstantiation**.

Protestant Christians who celebrate Holy Communion see the bread and wine as **symbols** of Jesus's sacrifice, helping them to remember what He did and to reflect on the meaning of His death and resurrection for them.

For many Christians, celebrating Communion brings people closer to God and closer to the community they worship God with: it is both a shared experience with others and a deeply personal one with God.





NOTES



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