

GCSE Religious Studies

Christianity: Beliefs and Teachings Workbook



Name:

Key Concepts in

Christianity

1. **Omnipotent:** The belief that God is all-..... With God's omnipotence, He created the world in six days and on the seventh day, He rested.
2. **Omnibenevolent:** The belief that God is all-loving. God loves us so much that he sent his one and only Son,, to save the sins of humanity.
3. **Trinity:** The belief that God is a God – in three parts: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each part is distinct and separate, yet of the same
4. **Incarnation:** This is the belief that God came to earth in human, i.e. Jesus. This is told in the Nativity story in the Bible, where Jesus was born to Mary – a
5. **Atonement:** "At-one-ment" means to say sorry and with God for your sins. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, humans are able to atone with God for their
6. **Resurrection:** This is the belief that Jesus came back to life after he was For Christians, this reflects the belief in life after death and the Hope of the spiritual resurrection of the
7. **Sacraments:** This is a ceremony where a person receives grace. For example, in the Sacrament of Baptism, a person's sins are washed away and they receive God's grace as they become a member of God's
8. **Evangelism:** Spreading to others and to convert others to your faith. Missionaries go to other communities and countries to tell the world about Jesus and spread the (the 'good news').

Word Box

Gospel
virgin
powerful
faith
soul
tripartite
Jesus
family
God
form
reconcile
sins
crucified

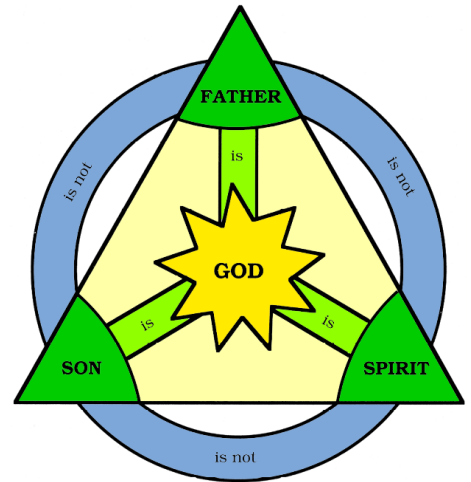


You will need to learn these words and definitions for your exam! In our a) style questions, you will have to give a definition and an example for each word!

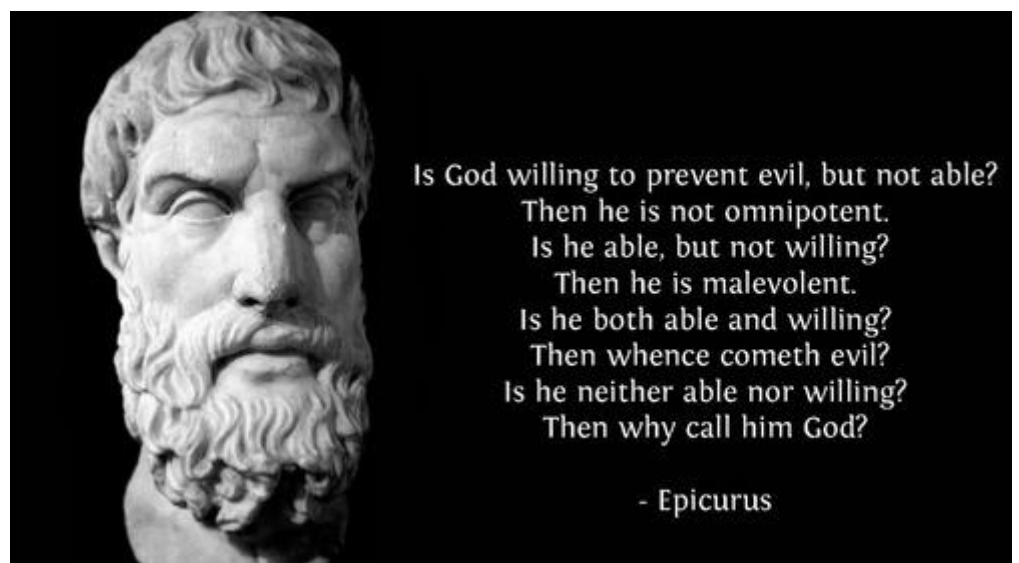
The Nature of God

God is:

- **The Trinity:** God is one, but is known through three distinct (separate) persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is known as the Holy Trinity.
 - Jesus said, "*I and the Father are one*" (John 10:30)
 - Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" (John 14:6)
- **Omnipotent:** God is all-powerful and can do anything. In the beginning, God created the world and since then, God has been involved in the lives of the people on earth. In Exodus, God sends seven plagues down on the land of Egypt to convince the Pharaoh to let the Jews go free.
- **Omnibenevolent:** He loves the world and all of the people in it so much that He sent his son, Jesus, to teach people about Him and to save them from their sins. God is full of mercy and offers forgiveness to all willing to receive it - all who want to reconcile.
 - God is, '*abounding in love*' (Psalm 86:15)
 - "*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16)
 - "*Nothing...will be able to separate us from the love of God.*" (Romans 8: 39)



Evil and Suffering: Some people believe that the existence of evil and suffering in the world is reason for there not to be a God. If God is all-powerful – so can do anything, and is all-knowing – so knows that evil exists, then why doesn't He do anything



about it? This is called the problem of evil.

There are several Christian responses to the problem of evil:

1. Good can come out of suffering
2. Religious communities can help those who are suffering through charity work and prayer
3. Suffering is not God's fault. It has come into the world as a result of:
 - a. Free will (we choose to do evil)
 - b. The 'original' choice to disobey God (Adam and Eve)
 - c. Human nature not being perfect. We do make the wrong choices sometimes!
4. Evil has to exist in order for good to exist. We could not have one without the other, just like we cannot have dark without light, or up without down
5. Suffering can lead to inner strength and ability to overcome suffering and succeed
6. Suffering can be a way of participating in the saving work of Jesus, e.g. through charity work (Christian Aid)

In the **Book of Job** in the Bible, God tests Job's faith by removing all of his luxuries. The cause of the evil in this story, is God, however some Christians might say that the suffering was part of God's greater plan and had a true purpose, even though Job could not see it to begin with.

Questions

1. Explain the Trinity.

.....
.....

2. What is the meaning of 'omnipotent'?

.....
.....

3. What is the meaning of 'omnibenevolent'?

.....
.....

4. What is the quote about God's love from John 3:16?

.....
.....

5. What is the problem of evil and suffering?

.....
.....

6. Explain two Christian responses to the problem of evil and suffering.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. What does the Book of Job tell Christians about?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Creation: Genesis 1

On the first day, God said,

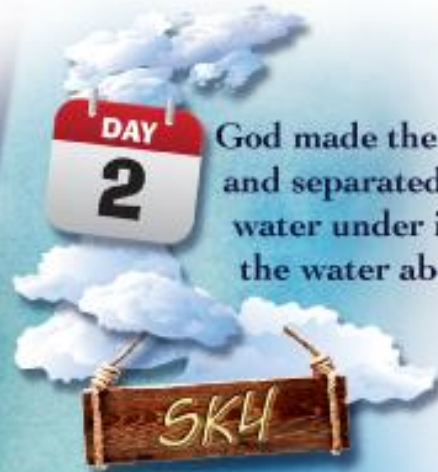


"Let there be light"

Then, God divided the light from the darkness. He called the light Day, and the darkness Night.



God made the space and separated the water under it from the water above it.



God named the space above "sky", the dry ground "land," and the water "seas".



God made the land grow plants and trees that produce seed, according to their different kinds.



God created animals and all living creatures, then he created man in his own image. He saw everything he had made and was satisfied.



God created different types of birds to fly across the sky and fish to fill the sea.



God created 2 special lights - the sun and moon, He also created the stars to shine on the earth.



Creation: Genesis 2 & 3

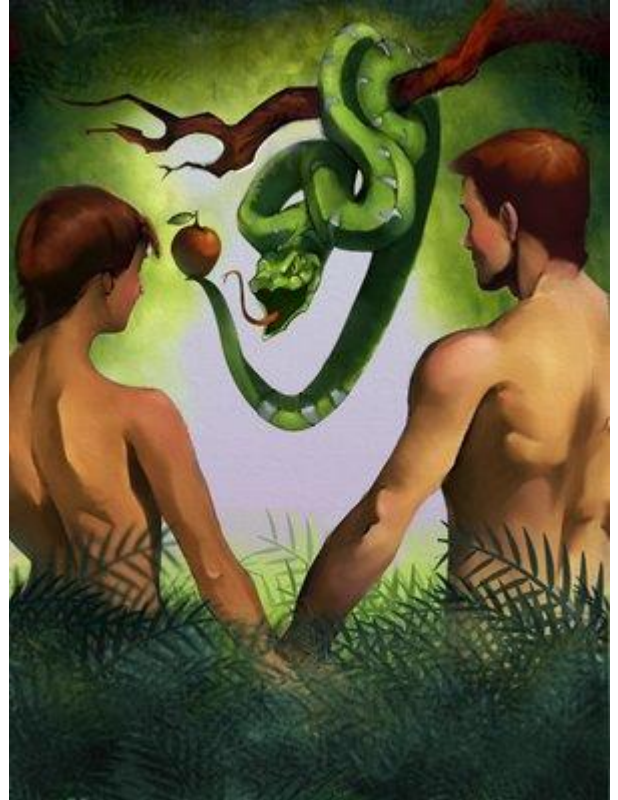
Genesis 2: God breathed life into Adam and put him in Eden. God had made the man in His image to keep Him company and look after the world. Adam named the animals but God wanted to make Adam a companion.

That night, God took a rib from Adam's side and made a woman. God told the man and woman that it was their job to take care of their new home.

Genesis 3: God warned Adam and Eve to, "Never touch the tree in the middle of the Garden. That tree gives knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat its fruit, you will die."

One day, Eve was tempted by a snake to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The snake said that by eating the fruit, Eve would become 'like God' in knowing right from wrong. Eve took a bite and passed some to Adam.

Eve she had disobeyed God and knew she'd done something wrong. Adam and Eve became unhappy and fearful of God. God was sad that Adam and Eve had disobeyed them. He told them that they had to leave the Garden of Eden, "From now on you'll have to scratch a living from the soil. You'll need to make clothes and grow food. Nothing will come easily -- not even childbirth. And one day, you will die."



1. Summarise the story of Adam and Eve

.....

.....

.....

2. What is the meaning of this story?

.....

.....

.....

Creation: Nature and Role of Humans

Literal vs Non-Literal Interpretation

Literal Christians read the Bible and believe each word to be word-for-word truth. For example, in Genesis 1 the Bible states that the world was made in six days and on the seventh, God rested. Literal Christians would see this to mean that the world was created in six 24-hour periods.

Non-literalist Christians, however, would read that God created the world in six days, and interpret this to mean that God created the world in six periods of time, perhaps even stretching over eons.

Therefore it is important to understand that whilst all Christians believe that the Bible was given to humans from God, their understandings of the text might change. For example, some Christians would allow for human error or poetic license, whereas others would argue that each word was dictated exactly as it is written by God to the writer.

The Role of the Word and Spirit in Creation

- The Spirit was involved in creation. *"The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."* (Genesis 1:1–2)
- The Spirit of God gave vital life to the vast creation, the term waters, signifies the vast expanse of creation, illustrated by the boundless expanse of the "waters".
- The Spirit, whose omniscience (all present) and omnipotence (all-powerful) maintains life and order in the universe
- We have an *eternal* spirit which will spend an eternity in heaven or hell. Our Creator is also eternal, because we are made in his image we are eternal. We have the ability to choose good from evil because we have free will like our Creator.
- **Quotes:**
 - **John 1: 1-15**
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"
 - **Job 33:4**
"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."



Creation: Questions:

1. How do literal Christians interpret the Bible?
-

.....

2. How do non-literal Christians interpret the Bible?

.....

.....

3. What might some people allow for when reading the Bible?

.....

.....

4. How was the Spirit involved in creation?

.....

.....

5. Where will our eternal spirit spend eternity?

.....

.....

6. Why do we have the ability to choose good from evil?

.....

.....

7. What is a quote from the Bible that tells us about the role of the Spirit?

.....

.....

Jesus Christ: Incarnation

Jesus Christ, or Jesus of Nazareth, was a preacher who was born to Mary in Bethlehem. For Christians, his coming was foretold as He was to be the Son of God. Jesus was referred to as the 'Messiah', which means

'anointed one' and is a saviour to a group of people. For Christians, the Messiah was Jesus Christ. Incarnation, therefore, literally means: 'God made flesh'.

Luke 1: 28-33: *"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus"*

John 1: 14 *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us"*

- The coming of the Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament.
- Christians believe the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in the mission, death, and resurrection of Jesus and that he will return to fulfil the rest of Messianic prophecy.
- Jesus was considered the Son of God
- From the coming of Jesus, God is present with his people in a new and decisive way.
- Even as a young boy Jesus was conscious of God's divine call on his life. Jesus knew, even at the age of 12, that he was not like other boys. He was called to his "Father's business," and that must be attended to, even if his parents did not understand.
- The Bible says, *"The child [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him."* *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."*



Incarnation: Questions:

1. What was Jesus referred to as and what does this mean?

.....

.....

2. What does 'incarnation' literally mean'?

.....

3. What does John 1:14 say about the incarnation?

.....

.....

4. What did Jesus know, even as a young boy?

.....

.....

Jesus Christ: Crucifixion

The crucifixion of Jesus (also known as the **Passion**) is a story about injustice, doubt, fear, pain and, ultimately, degrading death on the cross. It tells how God experienced these things in the same way as ordinary human beings. Christians believe that Christ's suffering and the wounds that he suffered play a great part in **redeeming** humanity from **sin**.

Another theme is **incarnation** - the death of Jesus shows humanity that God had become truly human and that he was willing to undergo every human suffering, right up to the final agony of death. Another is **obedience** - despite initial, and very human, reluctance and fear, Jesus demonstrates his total acquiescence to God's wishes.



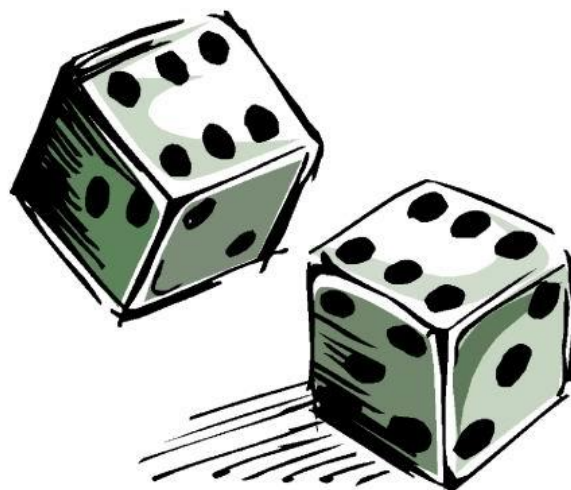
But the final theme is **victory** - the victory of Christ over death - and this is why the Passion story is inseparable from the story of the **Resurrection**.

Matthew 26: 27-28 "Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is **poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**"

Matthew 27: 28-50: "They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and then twisted together a **crown of thorns** and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and **mocked** him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. ³⁰They **spit** on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then **they led him away to crucify him...**

They came to a place called **Golgotha** (which means "the place of the skull")...

When they had crucified him, they **divided up his clothes by casting lots.** ³⁶And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.³⁷ Above his head they placed the written charge against him: **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.**"



Crucifixion: Questions:

1. What else is the story of the crucifixion of Jesus known as?

.....
.....
2. What do Christians believe about Christ's suffering?

.....
.....
3. How does Jesus show obedience in the crucifixion?

.....
.....
4. What is the final theme of the crucifixion?

.....
.....
5. What does Matthew 26: 27-28 say?

.....
.....
6. What does 'Golgotha' mean?

.....
.....
7. What happened after the crucifixion, whilst the guards were keeping watch?

Jesus Christ: Resurrection

The Resurrection is the Christian belief that after being put to death, Jesus arose from the dead. This is important to Christians because:

- The resurrection shows the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If God exists, and if He created the universe and has power over it, then He has power to raise the dead
- In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death
- It validates who Jesus claimed to be, namely, the **Son of God** and **Messiah**. For Christians, it is proof that He is the **Saviour** of the world
- It also validates the Old Testament prophecies that foretold of Jesus' suffering and resurrection. Christ's resurrection also authenticated His own claims that He would be raised on the third day. Without the resurrection, Christian faith would be useless.
- Because we know we will be resurrected to new life, we can endure persecution and danger for Christ's sake, just as Jesus did
- It demonstrates that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf
- It shows that God has the power to raise us from the dead.
- It guarantees that the bodies of those who believe in Christ will not remain dead but will be resurrected unto eternal life.



Evidence in the Bible:

Luke 24: 5-6: *“Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen!”*

1 Corinthians 15:3-8: *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time...Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸and last of all he appeared to me also”*

1 Corinthians 12-14: *“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body.”*

Resurrection: Questions:

1. What is the Resurrection?

.....
.....
2. What does God remind us of in resurrecting Jesus from the grave?

.....
.....
3. For Christians, what is the resurrection proof of?

.....
.....
4. What do Christians know as a result of the resurrection?

.....
.....
5. What does the Bible say about the resurrection? Choose one of the quotes and write it down.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Jesus Christ: Ascension

The Ascension of Jesus

Luke 24: 50-53: ⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ **While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.** ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Acts 1: 9 He [Jesus] **was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.**

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**"

Why is the Ascension important to Christians?

- 1) It signalled the end of His earthly ministry. God the Father had lovingly sent His Son into the world at Bethlehem, and now the Son was returning to the Father.
- 2) It signified success in His earthly work. All that He had come to do, He had accomplished.
- 3) It marked the return of His heavenly glory.
- 4) It symbolised that God was pleased with His work. "*The One with whom the Father is well pleased*" (Matthew 17:5) was received up in honour.
- 5) It allowed Him to prepare a place for us (John 14:2).
- 6) It set the pattern for His return. When Jesus comes to set up the Kingdom, He will return just as He left-literally, bodily, and visibly in the clouds.



Ascension: Questions

1. What does Luke 24 say about the ascension?

.....
.....
2. What does Acts 1 say about the ascension?

.....
.....
3. What did the ascension signal?

.....
.....
4. What did the ascension mark?

.....
.....
5. What did the ascension symbolise?

.....
.....
6. What did the ascension allow Jesus to do?

.....
.....
7. What did the ascension set the pattern for?
.....
.....
.....

Atonement

Atonement: "At-one-ment" means to say sorry and reconcile with God. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, humans are able to atone with God for their sins.



Matthew 26: 27-

28 "Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** This is my blood of the covenant, which is **poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**"

Leviticus 16: 20-22: **20** "When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat.**21** He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and **confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion** of the Israelites—all their **sins**—and **put them on the goat's head**. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. **22** The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness."

Atonement: Questions:

- 1. What is the meaning of 'atonement'?

.....
.....

- 2. What does the Bible teach Christians about atonement? Read the quotes above before answering the question.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

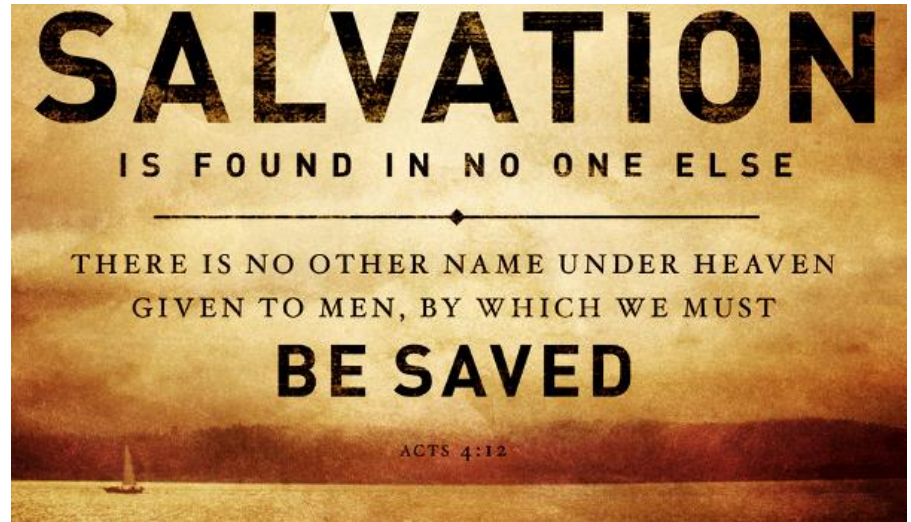
Salvation

Salvation means 'to save from sin'. Christians believe that through Jesus' sacrifice, we are able to be saved from our sin. The only requirement is that we atone (ask forgiveness and reconcile) for our wrongdoings.

Isaiah 53: 3-9: "He **took up our pain** and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God... and **by his wounds we are healed.**"

What are Christians saved from?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, Christians are saved from "wrath," that is, from God's judgment of **sin**. Our sin has separated us from God, and the **consequence of sin is death**. In the Bible, Salvation refers to our deliverance from the consequence of sin and therefore involves the removal of sin. Only God can remove sin.



How does God save?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, God has rescued us through Jesus. Specifically, it was Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection that achieved our salvation. Scripture is clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God and is only available through faith in Jesus Christ.

How do Christians receive Salvation?

Christians are saved by faith. First, Christians must *hear* the gospel—the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. Then, **Christians must believe—fully trust in Jesus.** This involves **atonement** and repentance, (a changing of mind about sin and Christ)

In Acts 2: 1-6, the apostles were visited by the Holy Spirit, who gave them the grace of God. They were now able to speak in other languages as, "*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.*"

Salvation: Exam-style questions:

1. What does salvation mean?

.....
.....
.....

2. What is the requirement to be saved from sin?

.....
.....
.....

3. What are Christians saved from?

.....
.....
.....

4. How does God save?

.....
.....
.....

5. How do Christians receive salvation?

.....
.....
.....

The role of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical worship

Evangelical Christians are those who share and promote the good news (the Gospel) of Christ. Their worship centres around the belief that the Holy Spirit is a sign of God's work. Paul says that Christians "*worship by the Spirit of God*" (Phil 3:3) and through the Spirit our prayers ascend to God. Therefore, in Evangelical worship, the Spirit plays a central role in worship.

The Bible (God's Word) says that the Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of Jesus*" (Acts 16:7) and "*the spirit of our God*" (I Corinthians 6:11). The Spirit was involved in the creation of the world (Genesis 1:2) and it brought us the Bible (2 Peter 1:21). The Spirit caused the Virgin Mary to conceive (Luke 1:35), guides us into truth (John 16:13), convicts us of sin (John 16:8), performs miracles (Acts 8:39), and intercedes with God for us (Romans 8:26). The Spirit assures us that we belong to God as he "*speaks to us deep in our hearts*" (Romans 8:16 NLT).



In Evangelical worship, Christians may respond and act spontaneously, or with emotion, and unplanned acts may happen in the service – because the believers are *moved* by the Holy Spirit.

Evangelical worship, therefore, emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit and the direct experience of the presence of God by the believer. It is energetic and dynamic. Its members believe they are driven by the power of God moving within them.

Role of the Spirit: Questions:

1. Who are Evangelical Christians?

.....

.....
2. What does Evangelical worship centre around?

.....
.....
3. What does the Bible say the Holy Spirit is?

.....
.....
4. What was the Spirit involved in?

.....
.....
5. How was the Spirit important in the birth of Jesus?

.....
.....
6. How do Christians respond in Evangelical worship?

.....
.....
7. Who or what are Evangelical Christians driven by during worship?

The Afterlife

Eschatological beliefs: Eschatological beliefs are beliefs about death, judgement, resurrection and the end of the world.

John 11:25-26 *"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."*

John 14: 2-7 *"My Father's house has many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you? ...I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am... I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know^[a] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him"*

Judgement:

Matthew 25:31-46 This passage tells us about the **Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**. Jesus explains that those who follow Jesus' teachings (the sheep) go to heaven. (*"whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"*)

Those who don't follow Jesus' teachings (the goats) *"will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

Luke 16: 19-31 This passage tells of a rich man and a beggar called Lazarus. The rich man never helped Lazarus. When the time came, they both died, and Lazarus was with Abraham in heaven. The rich man, however, was *"in agony in this fire."*

Resurrection:

1 Corinthians 15: 42-55 *"⁴²So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; ⁴³it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in*



*weakness, it is raised in power; 44it is sown a natural body, it is **raised a spiritual body**... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed... the saying that is written will come true: "**Death has been swallowed up in victory.**"*

Traditional and Contemporary Beliefs about Heaven and Hell

- Christians believe that there is some sort of life after death, which needs to be prepared for during life
- Life after death is received through faith
- Entry to heaven depends on a person's response to Jesus, and to those in need on earth
- Resurrection is expected, because of the resurrection of Jesus
- There is a hell - the opposite of heaven - a place of separation from God
- **RC churches:**
 - The souls of very good believers will go directly to heaven
 - Most others will go to purgatory - a place of cleansing and reflection that is between heaven and earth
 - Prayers can be said for those in purgatory to shorten their stay there, and intercessions (saying a prayer on behalf of another person) can be made through indulgences and penance (punishment / confession)

How important is the belief in the afterlife?

Death is certainly a fact of life, but faith in God gives people a confidence that there is an afterlife that is centred and focused on God and His goodness. Christians may have no fear of death as they know that God has prepared an afterlife for them to reward their faithfulness in life.

Others believe that what is most important is what is done on earth. Throughout our lives, so long as we try to be honest, kind and thoughtful of others, there is no more that we can do.

Another opinion is that after death, there is no afterlife. The only heritage we leave behind is the memories of those who knew us.



The Afterlife: Questions

1. *What are Eschatological beliefs?*

.....
.....
2. *What does John 11: 25-26 say?*

.....
.....
.....
.....
3. *Explain the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.*

.....
.....
.....
.....
4. *Explain the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.*

.....
.....
.....
.....
5. *Why do Christians believe that they will be resurrected?*

.....
.....
6. *How is life after death received?*

7. Explain Roman Catholic beliefs about life after death.

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. How important is belief in the afterlife?

.....

.....

.....

.....