

For

**AQA**

GCSE Religious  
Studies B (8063)  
Catholic Christianity

Bible passages for 9-1  
GCSE Religious studies

Sources of  
**Wisdom**  
for Catholic Christianity

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# An overview of the Bible

## What is the Bible, and what does it mean to Catholics?


The Bible is the Holy Book of Christianity. Christians believe that the Bible contains the record of God's **revelation** to humans – it reveals to them who God is. They also believe that it is the result of God's **inspiration** – that God motivated and guided the range of human writers who wrote the different parts of the Bible.

### To do...

 In your own words, explain what is meant by **revelation** and **inspiration**.


The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. Catholic Bibles have 73 books. Protestant Bibles don't include the Deuterocanonical books, reducing the total number of books in them to 66.


### To do...

 In the table on the next page, highlight the different genres (types of writing) which can be found in the Old Testament.

 Which two types of writing in the Old Testament are most different from each other?

### To do...

 Using a different colour, highlight the types of writing which can be found in the New Testament.

 What are the similarities and differences between the types of writing used in the Old and New Testaments?

<b>The Old Testament</b>	<p>The first five books are the Law, also known as the Torah ('law' in Hebrew) or Pentateuch ('five scrolls' in Greek). They tell the story of creation and of how God made the Israelites his chosen people and gave them instructions about how to live as God's people.</p>	<p><b>Genesis Exodus Leviticus</b> <b>Numbers Deuteronomy</b></p>
	<p>The Old Testament Historical books continue the story of the Israelites, during which they were ruled by kings (including King David) and built the Temple in Jerusalem. They were conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians and sent into exile. After some time, they were allowed to return home and they rebuilt the Temple.</p>	<p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther</p>
	<p>The Wisdom literature asks the 'big questions' about God, humanity, suffering, what the world is like and why it is like it. Some of the wisdom books are written as poetry, and the Psalms are hymns.</p>	<p><b>Job Psalms</b> <b>Proverbs Ecclesiastes</b> Song of Songs</p>
	<p>The books of Prophecy tell the stories of the prophets, ordinary people who were chosen to be messengers of God. Their prophecies often warned the Israelites that there would be consequences for disobeying God. Many Christians believe that some of their prophecies foretold the life of Jesus.</p>	<p><b>Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel</b> Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>
	<p>The Deuterocanonical books which are part of Catholic Bibles are not included in most Protestant Bibles. Therefore, they represent Catholic but not always Protestant teaching, reflecting the diversity in ways the Bible can be read by different denominations.</p>	<p><b>Tobit Judith</b> <b>Wisdom of Solomon</b> <b>Sirach Baruch</b> 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees Additions to Daniel and Esther</p>
<b>The New Testament</b>	<p>The four Gospels tell the story of the life of Jesus. 'Gospel' means 'good news', referring to the 'good news' that Jesus' life is for Christians. The first three share much of the same content and are known as the synoptic Gospels. John tells the same story, but in a very different style.</p>	<p><b>Matthew Mark</b> <b>Luke John</b></p>
	<p>The Acts of the Apostles (often known as just 'Acts') is a book of history, which tells the story of the early Christians. It was written by the same author as Luke's Gospel.</p>	<p><b>Acts</b></p>
	<p>The epistles are letters which were written by a range of early Christian leaders to other Christians in the 1st century CE. They explain Christian beliefs and give instructions and guidance on how to live as a Christian.</p>	<p><b>Romans 1 Corinthians</b> 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon <b>Hebrews</b> James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude</p>
	<p>The only apocalyptic book in the New Testament is Revelation. The word 'apocalypse' means a revelation or unveiling of future events.</p>	<p><b>Revelation</b></p>

# Creation

## What does Genesis chapter 1 say about God, humans and the creation of the world?

The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible. 'Genesis' means 'beginning'. The first chapter of Genesis tells the story of creation. It describes how, over the course of six days, God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. For Christians, this shows God's infinite creativity and power.

*In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*


*And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.*

*And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.*

*And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.*

**Genesis chapter 1 verses 1-19**

### To do...

 At the end of each day, how does God feel about creation?

In verses 1-19 of the creation story, God creates the world. In the second part of the story, God populates it with animals and people.

Christians believe that humans are created in 'the image of God' ('Imago Dei').

God spends six days creating the world, and rests on the seventh day.

Both religions which have this passage as part of their sacred text have a Sabbath day of rest, on Saturday for Jews and on Sunday for Christians.

*And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.*

*And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.*

*Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'*

*So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*


*God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. **And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.** So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.*

*These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.*

**Genesis chapter 1 verse 20 – chapter 2 verse 4**

### To do...

 At each stage of the story, God makes creation happen by commanding it to happen. List all of God's commands in order:

1. Let there be light
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.


## To do...

'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness . . .'


Christians believe that God made humans in the image of God and to resemble him in having some of his characteristics, such as:

- being intelligent and able to think
- being able to use language to communicate
- having free will, and being able to make choices
- having a moral sense and knowing right from wrong
- being creative

Keep an eye out for these characteristics in the next two topics as well.

 Why might each of these things be good for humans to have?

 How are humans different to what Christians understand God to be like?

 Choose three adjectives to describe what Christians might learn from the creation story about the nature of God.

## Do all Christians believe the same things about the creation of the world?

Christians believe that God reveals himself in the Bible, and that the human authors of the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, they do not all interpret what the Bible says in the same ways. Many of the differences between different Christian denominations can be traced to different understandings of the Bible, but a central belief in the value and importance of the Bible is something which unites Christians.

Some Christians believe that it is important to read the Bible according to the plain meaning of the text, without speculating about the context in which it was written or the authors' intentions. This way of understanding the Bible is sometimes called 'literalist', because it takes the Bible as the literal word of God.

Christians who take a literalist approach to the Bible might believe the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible's human authors by directing them in exactly what words to write, and that no one should question anything that the Bible appears to teach because it comes from God. They are likely to read Bible stories as historical accounts of events which actually happened, and where there appear to be contradictions between different parts of the Bible they might think that this just shows that, as humans, people do not yet have enough understanding.

There are also a wide range of views held by Christians which fall in between these two ways of understanding the Bible.

Many Christians believe that the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the Bible's human authors gave them insights which they then recorded in a way which was suitable for their audience and the times they were living in. They will take this into account when reading the Bible, and might use what they know about the author's context to help them to understand the Bible's message.

Along with this, they might believe that some stories are metaphors used by the author to explain an idea or to symbolise the power of God. In their eyes, this approach doesn't devalue the importance or truth of the Bible, rather it helps the reader to understand the truth more clearly.



Catholics believe that:

- The Bible cannot be understood on its own. The Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium (the teaching authority of the church) are so connected that one of them cannot stand without the others.
- God is the principal author of Scripture. He made use of specific people who wrote in a human language and using their own imaginations and creativity as authors, at a particular time and place in history to produce the Bible.
- At times, Christians have to work carefully to determine when the sacred author is saying something is true, and when an author is writing metaphorically using an image to help bring out the truth more clearly. A Catholic will look to the authority of the Catholic Church to guide them in this.

Protestant Christians tend to emphasise the Bible as the main source of authority, though their church traditions also play a role. Some Protestants, especially evangelicals, see the Bible as the only source of authority for guidance on Christian faith and morals. This approach is sometimes known as sola scriptura ('by Scripture alone').

Reading the Bible is a central part of public and private worship for Catholics. The first part of the Mass is the Liturgy of the Word which contains readings from the Old and New Testaments. This is presented in the Lectionary, and over a three-year cycle much of the Bible is read aloud. The Liturgy of the Eucharist originates from both the Old and New Testaments and contains many phrases and symbols from the Bible.

### To do...



How do Christians sometimes understand what the Bible says in different ways?



What do all Christians agree on about the Bible?

Genesis is an ancient book. Traditionally, Moses was thought to be its author. However, most Bible experts argue that Genesis was the work of a number of writers over a long period of time, and that it was passed on as an oral story for generations before it was written down.

Here are two different ways to understand Genesis 1, as well as some beliefs about God, humanity and creation that all Christians have in common:

### **Literal understanding**

Some Christians believe that the creation story in Genesis is history, and so is literally true. Therefore, it can be understood as an historical account of how the world was created in six days of 24 hours.

### **Non-literal understanding**

Some Christians do not believe that the creation story in Genesis is literally true. They might see it as a piece of poetry or a myth, a story which explains some important religious truths. It might matter less for them how the world was created than that it was created by God. They might accept scientific explanations of creation, and see them as being caused by God, seeing science and religion as being compatible with each other. They might understand a 'day' as representing a period of time rather than literally 24 hours.

### **Shared understanding**

All Christians find truths about God, humanity and the world in Genesis, whether they understand it literally or non-literally.

 Which lines from Genesis chapter 1 describe these beliefs which all Christians hold in common?

- a) Creation was intentionally brought about by God
- b) God is supremely powerful
- c) God is transcendent (not part of the created universe)
- d) Humans are 'in the image of God'
- e) God's creation is good

# The Garden of Eden

## What does the Bible say about how humans were created?





Most Bible scholars believe that Genesis chapter 2 was written by a different author than chapter 1. It seems to be an alternative account of the creation of humans, though it might be a re-telling of that part of chapter 1 in more depth. It tells of how God creates man and woman, and plants a garden for them to live in.

*In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, 'You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.'*

**Genesis chapter 2 verses 4-9 and 15-17**

### To do...

-  How does God make the man?
-  What role does God give the man?
-  What does God forbid the man to do?
-  Do you think that the man will obey God, or disobey him?  
Why?

*Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner. So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said,*

*'This at last is bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one shall be called Woman,  
for out of Man this one was taken.'*

*Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

**Genesis chapter 2 verses 18-25**

### **To do...**

 What does God say about why two humans are created?

 How does God create the woman?

***'And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.'***

The man and woman's nakedness represents their innocence. At this point in the unfolding story, they were living in paradise, they would never die and they did not know how to do wrong.

## To do...

 Compare Genesis chapter 1 with chapter 2.

### What do the accounts say about God?

Genesis chapter 1

Genesis chapter 2

### What do they say about humans?

Genesis chapter 1


Genesis chapter 2

### What do they say about how humans should relate to the created world?

Genesis chapter 1

Genesis chapter 2

 What are the differences between the first and second accounts of creation?

 Overall, how similar do you think Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are? Colour this bar to show your answer and explain below.

**Completely  
the same**

**Totally  
different**

# The Fall of Humankind


## What went wrong?


At the end of Genesis chapter 2, the man and the woman were living in a close relationship with God. By the end of chapter 3, they have been banished from the Garden of Eden as the result of a very bad choice. The events in this chapter are often called the 'Fall of Humankind'.

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat from any tree in the garden"?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; but God said, "You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die."' But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.*

**Genesis chapter 3 verses 1-6**


## To do...

 What role does the snake play in Genesis chapter 3?

 Highlight the ways in which the snake tempts Eve to eat the fruit.

## To do...

Before they committed the first sin by eating the fruit, the man and the woman had a close relationship with God, who is described as walking in the garden and talking to them.

 How does this next part of the story show that the relationship has been damaged?

*Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.*

*They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.*

**Genesis chapter 3 verses 7-13**

The LORD God said to the serpent,

'Because you have done this,  
cursed are you among all animals  
and among all wild creatures;  
upon your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life.  
I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and hers;  
he will strike your head,  
and you will strike his heel.'

To the woman he said,

'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children,  
yet your desire shall be for your husband,  
and he shall rule over you.'  
And to the man he said,

'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,  
and have eaten of the tree  
about which I commanded you,  
"You shall not eat of it"  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread until you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken; you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.'


The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all who live.  
And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and  
**clothed them.**

Then the LORD God said, 'See, the man has become like one of us, knowing  
good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the  
tree of life, and eat, and live for ever'— therefore the LORD God sent him forth  
from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove  
out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim,  
and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

### Genesis chapter 3 verses 14-24

### To do...

Christians believe that sin (by which they mean wrongdoing) has consequences.

 Highlight the ways in which Adam and Eve are punished for eating the fruit.

Even in his anger, God still makes clothes for Adam and Eve.

The story of the fall of humankind ends with Adam and Eve being banished from the Garden of Eden. As with chapters 1 and 2, some Christians believe that this story should be interpreted literally (i.e. there was a real Adam and Eve who ate the fruit from an actual tree), others believe it is a symbolic story to explain deep truths about God, the world and humanity.

For all Christians, Genesis chapter 3 helps them to understand an important question – if humans were created in the image of God, why are they imperfect? In particular, why do they do things which are wrong (which Christians call 'sin')?

### To do...



What does this story say about human nature? Match up these heads and tails. Some tails match more than one head.

Adam and Eve chose to eat the fruit

Life can be difficult for humans

They could think through the bad consequences of their actions

Humans are rational

They ate from the tree even though they knew they weren't supposed to

Childbirth will be painful, work will be a struggle

They tried to hide from God

Humans have free will

They tried to place the blame for their actions elsewhere

Humans are 'fallen' – they act wrongly

They were sent out of the Garden of Eden

Humans must take responsibility for their actions

Humans are different to animals

The relationship between humans and God has changed

### To do...

Which of these would you say are evidence of human sin?

**Inequality**

**War**

**Earthquakes**

**Disobedience**

**Bullying**

**Drought**

**Climate change**


**Racism**

Why?

Christians see the rest of the Bible as being about God's attempts to bring humankind back into a close relationship with him, seeking to bring about atonement – to find a way for humans to make right for their wrongdoing, and get back into a right relationship with God.



## To do...

 Create a storyboard telling the story of the first humans from their creation to the Fall, as it is told in Genesis chapters 1-3. Choose six passages that tell the story and write them in the text areas below, designing an image to represent each passage. Give your storyboard a title.

Title:


# Jesus the Incarnate Son and the Word of God

## Christians believe that Jesus is 'incarnate' and 'the Word of God' – what does that mean?

The life of Jesus, his birth, teachings, death and resurrection, are at the heart of the Christian religion. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record the story of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Early Christian thinkers, beginning with St. Paul, reflected on Jesus' significance and developed how Christians understand him.

'Incarnation' comes from a Latin word meaning 'being made flesh'. Christians believe that God took human form as Jesus Christ, and that...


Jesus is the Son of God and the second 'person' of the Trinity, and that he is both human and divine.


Jesus' birth was unique. They teach that the Virgin Mary became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit after accepting the invitation from God to be the mother of his Son. Catholics believe that Mary always remained a virgin.

The Son of God existed before he became incarnate in Jesus, and Jesus now exists eternally after his ascension to heaven. Jesus had to fully experience the human condition, from conception to death, for his life to have meaning for us.

God knows completely what it is like to be human, which means that God, as Jesus, can identify with human beings. Christians believe that the incarnation is a demonstration of God's immense love for human beings and the means of their salvation.


### To do...

 Read Luke chapter 1 verses 26–38 and Matthew chapter 1 verses 18–25. List four ways in which these accounts indicate that Jesus' birth was unique.

 Sum up what these passages say about who Jesus was in no more than 30 words.

John's Gospel doesn't relate the incarnation in the same way as Matthew and Luke do, by telling the nativity stories. Instead, in the prologue (or introduction) to his Gospel, the eternal Word of God becomes incarnate in the person of Jesus. John uses the Greek phrase 'ho logos', which means 'the Word', to mean Jesus the Son, the second person of the Trinity.

### To do...

 Draw lines to show where the following Christian beliefs about the Word of God can be found in John chapter 1.

The Word of God is eternal

The Word of God took part in creation.

The Word of God brings life.

The Word of God is the light.

The Word of God became Jesus (incarnation)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*

**John chapter 1 verses 1-5 and 14**

### To do...

 In your own words, explain what John says about:

The Word's relationship to God

The importance of the incarnation

### Keywords...

**Gospel** – from a Greek word meaning 'good news'. The first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which give accounts of Jesus' life and teachings

**Incarnation** – from a Latin word meaning 'being made flesh'. The belief that Jesus Christ is God 'incarnate', meaning that the Son of God became a full human

# Jesus the Son of God and Son of Man

## What do these two titles tell us about what Christians believe about Jesus?

In Christianity, Jesus is sometimes known by the titles 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man'.

'Son of God' is used to emphasise that Jesus is divine – that he is God, the second person of the Trinity.

In the Gospels, Jesus often calls himself 'Son of Man'. This is a somewhat mysterious title which has several layers of meaning. It is often used in connection with Jesus' suffering and death and to stress that Jesus is an ordinary human being.

Christians believe that Jesus was both fully God and fully human.

These two passages both come from Mark's Gospel. In the first, Jesus is speaking to the disciples and foretells his death and resurrection. The second passage comes from when Jesus was on trial, being interrogated by the high priest.

*Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

**Mark chapter 8 verse 31**


*Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' Jesus said, 'I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power", and "coming with the clouds of heaven."*

**Mark chapter 14 verses 61-62**

### To do...

 In these two passages, what things are associated with the Son of Man?

### To do...

 The belief that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human can be seen in the Bible. Look up the verses in the table on the page opposite. Which ones emphasise Jesus' divinity and which ones emphasise his humanity? Fill in the table with a short summary of each verse in the correct column.

When reading just a single verse of Scripture it can sometimes be helpful to read the verses above and below it as well, and to look at the title of the section which the verse is in, as ways of understanding the context and meaning of the verse.

	Jesus as divine	Jesus as human
<p><b>Matthew</b> chapter 28 verse 18</p>		
<p><b>Luke</b> chapter 2 verse 7</p>		
<p><b>Matthew</b> chapter 8 verse 27</p>		
<p><b>John</b> chapter 11 verse 35</p>		
<p><b>Mark</b> chapter 2 verses 5-7</p>		
<p><b>1 Peter</b> chapter 2 verse 22</p>		
<p><b>Philippians</b> chapter 2 verse 6</p>		

# Jesus's moral teaching

## What did Jesus teach about how to live a good life?

In Christianity, Jesus is seen as a model of how to live a good life, and also as the inspiration to lead one. Christians use the Bible as an authoritative source for moral teaching, especially the examples of Jesus' actions and teachings as found in the Gospels.

## The Beatitudes

The main teachings of Jesus on how to live the Christian life can be found in the Sermon on the Mount, which is in Matthew's Gospel. It opens with a list of blessings which are called the beatitudes (from the Latin word for blessed, happy or fortunate). They are a strange list of nine different characteristics which people might have, most of which don't sound fortunate at all by the usual standards of the world.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the **meek**, for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when others **revile** you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

**Matthew chapter 5 verses 3-12**

'Mourn' means to be very sad or sorrowful, usually over someone or something which has been lost.

'Meek' means being gentle and humble.

'Righteous' means behaving in a pure, fair and just way.

To 'revile' someone means to speak to them abusively.

## To do...



A Christian might use the beatitudes to guide them to try to live their life in the way that Jesus would want them to. Choose two of the types of people mentioned in the beatitudes and describe how a Christian could live like that today.

## The Sermon on the Mount

The main teachings of Jesus on how to live the Christian life can be found in the Sermon on the Mount, which is in Matthew's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel was probably written for an audience with a Jewish background and it includes many references to the Old Testament.



Jesus teaches his followers about the Law of Moses and the commandments and how they should interpret them. Jesus states that he has not come to destroy the Old Testament law, but to complete it.

*'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil.'*


**Matthew chapter 5 verse 17**

Jesus goes on to take particular laws and develop each of them in a new way that goes beyond their original setting. He usually begins with the phrase 'You have heard it said ...' to refer to one of the laws, then goes on to say, 'but I say to you' before expanding on that law. In acting this way, Jesus implicitly claimed that he had the authority to do so, as God's special messenger.

### To do...

-  Read Matthew chapter 5 verses 21–48 and complete the table on the next page with the teachings Jesus gives to his followers.
-  'In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus often took rule about how to behave and expanded on it to what is happening in your heart.' How far do you agree?

### To do...

-  As well as Jesus' teachings, Christians also have his example to follow. Match up these heads and tails.

In the Gospels there are many stories in which Jesus cares for the sick. Jesus made the blind see, cured people of leprosy and gave the deaf hearing.

When Jesus was presented with a woman who was caught committing adultery, he did not condemn her even though she was guilty. He told the crowd, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.'

Jesus also showed forgiveness in the last moments of his life. While he was on the cross he says, 'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'

This means that Christians shouldn't be quick to pass judgement, but should be compassionate as we have all done wrong.

Jesus' example shows Christians that they should treat others with compassion, love, mercy and forgiveness.

This shows that Christians must treat the vulnerable with compassion and care.

### **Murder and anger**

'You have heard it said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"'

**If you are even angry with or insult your brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement.**

**Be reconciled to them before making an offering to God.**

### **Adultery and lust**

'You have heard it said, "You shall not commit adultery"'

### **Divorce**

'It was also said, "Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce"'

### **Taking oaths**

'Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord"'

### **Revenge**

'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"'

### **Love of neighbour**

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy"'



## What did Jesus teach about responding to those in need?


Mark's Gospel describes how, on one occasion, a Pharisee asked Jesus which of the commandments was the most important one. In his reply, Jesus gave the two great commandments:

*' "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'*

**Mark chapter 12 verses 30-31**

What does loving your neighbour mean in practice? In this passage from Matthew's Gospel, Jesus uses imagery which would have been familiar to people in Israel at the time when he lived, of a shepherd dividing his animals into different types, to illustrate his teaching about how we should treat our neighbours.


### To do...

 As you read, highlight what the passage says will be done by people who are 'the sheep' (on the right) and by 'the goats' (on the left), using a different colour for each.

That 'the Son of Man (i.e. Jesus) comes in his glory' is a reference to the Christian belief that one day, Jesus will return and everyone who has lived will have the quality and goodness of their life judged by him.

Jesus often referred to himself as 'the Son of Man'. In this passage, 'king' is also used as a metaphor for Jesus.

### To do...

 To be righteous is to behave in a pure, fair and just way.


How do people need to help others in order to be called 'righteous'?


*'When the **Son of Man** comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then **the king** will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the **righteous** will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'*


**Matthew chapter 25 verses 31-46**


In the parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus promises that those who perform these acts to those in need will be rewarded for having shown charity to Jesus himself. Christians believe that the image of God is present, therefore kindness to a person is also kindness to God.

### To do...


 List three actions which were done by 'the sheep'.

 List three actions which were done (or ought to have been done, but weren't) by 'the goats'.

 What will happen to the righteous people?

 What will happen to the unrighteous people?

 What does this passage tell Christians today about how to treat others?

 How might they put this into practice in their everyday lives?


## Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching refers to the teachings of the Catholic Church about supporting and promoting the welfare and dignity of all of society. It is inspired by the example set by Jesus and his teachings, such as the great commandments and the parable of the sheep and the goats.

There are seven key themes of Catholic Social Teaching

1. The sacredness of life in all its stages and the dignity of the human person.
2. The call to family, community and participation.
3. Human rights and the responsibility to protect them.
4. The option for the poor and vulnerable.
5. The dignity of work and the rights of workers.
6. Solidarity with all people as one global family.
7. Care for God's creation.

### To do...

 Which of the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching are reflected in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats? Circle them in the list above, and circle the relevant parts of the passage on p23.


## Imago Dei

Most people, whether they are religious or not, believe that human life is special and should be cared for. The Catholic Church teaches that all human life is sacred and that everyone has a right to life which should be protected and valued at every stage. Catholics believe each person is unique because God made them in his own image. 'In the image of God' is '**Imago Dei**' in Latin.

### Key concept...

**Imago Dei** – 'In the image of God'. The belief that human beings are uniquely a reflection of God's personhood. Unlike the other animals, human beings are rational, free and moral.

### To do...

 Revisit the story of Creation on p4. How does it show that humans are different from all the other animals?

Catholics also see this idea in Luke's Gospel. The verse below is spoken by Elizabeth, who was Mary's cousin. She was pregnant, and it describes part of her reaction to the news that Mary was also pregnant, with Jesus.

*For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.*

**Luke chapter 1 verse 44**

Catholics might learn from this verse that Jesus was recognised as a living person from before he was born. The Catholic Church teaches that life begins at conception, and that it is God who gives life at this moment, which is the start of a human being's relationship with God. This informs the Catholic Church's teachings on issues such as abortion.

# God

## What do Christians believe that God is like?

Christians believe in one God. This is called monotheism.

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.*


**Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4**

Christianity teaches that God is transcendent, which means that God is above and beyond anything in earth or space. This can make God difficult to describe and Christians accept that in many ways the nature and actions of God are a mystery to human beings. However, they do believe that God has the following characteristics or qualities:

God is eternal	He has no beginning or end.
God is omnibenevolent	He is all-loving and cares about human beings.
God is omnipotent	He has unlimited power.
God is omniscient	He knows all things – past, present and future.
God is omnipresent	He is always present and is everywhere at all times; he is not limited by a physical body.
God is creator	He created the world and everything in it. He cares about his creation and has a plan for it.
God is perfectly good	There is no sin or evil within him.
God is the ultimate judge	He will hold each individual to account for their thoughts, words and behaviour.

### To do...

Read Psalm 139 verses 1-18 on the page opposite. This Psalm is a prayer of praise, marvelling at God. The writer is amazed by how wonderful God is.

-  How many of the characteristics and qualities which Catholics believe God has can you find reflected in this psalm? Highlight the sections.

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O LORD, you know it completely.  
You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in *Sheol*, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night',  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
you knit me together in my mother's womb.  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
that I know very well.  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
when I was being made in secret,  
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.  
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
all the days that were formed for me,  
when none of them as yet existed.  
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
How vast is the sum of them!  
I try to count them – they are more than the sand;  
I come to the end – I am still with you.

**Psalm 139 verses 1-18**

Sheol was the Jewish name for the underworld. Christians usually understand this word to mean hell.

Christians believe in one single God, who made himself known to the world as three separate and inter-related 'persons':

- God the Father
- God the Son (Jesus)
- God the Holy Spirit

These three 'persons' of God are known as the Holy Trinity.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a central belief for all Christians, but it is also something which is difficult to understand. Christians believe that human minds can never fully understand God, and the Trinity is considered to be true but also ultimately incomprehensible.

The doctrine of the Trinity is set out in the Nicene Creed. It provides a model of relationship between the three different persons. Christians believe that each person of the Trinity is associated with a special function:

- God the Father created heaven and earth
- God the Son, Jesus, is the saviour of the world
- God the Holy Spirit guides, helps and inspires human beings

The Bible does not use the word 'trinity' to describe God. When the first Christians began to reflect on their experience of God, they began to see that they experienced the one God in three different ways, which they also saw in the Scriptures.

In the stories in Genesis of the creation and fall, the God is sometimes referred to in the plural.

*Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'*

*Then the LORD God said, 'See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil...'*

**Genesis chapter 1 verse 26 and chapter 3 verse 22**

In the New Testament, Jesus refers to the three persons of God.

*'All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'*

*'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...'*

**Matthew chapter 11 verse 27 and chapter 28 verse 19**

The accounts of Jesus' baptism in Matthew's and Mark's Gospels are as follows:

*And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'*

**Matthew chapter 3 verses 13–17**

*In those days Jesus came up from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.'*

**Mark chapter 1 verses 9-11**

### To do...



How do these accounts of the baptism of Jesus indicate that God the Father and the Holy Spirit were present?

### To find out...



What words are said when a Christian is baptised? How does this reflect the doctrine of the Trinity?

### Keywords...

#### **Nicene Creed**

A creed is a statement of what Christians believe and teach. The Nicene Creed was adopted by the Church at Nicea in 325 CE.

#### **Doctrine**

A teaching held by the Catholic Church to help others know about God.

# The Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost

## What are Christian beliefs about redemption?

Catholics believe that human sins puts a barrier between people and God. Redemption is the idea that the negative effects of sin have been made right by Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross. The Catholic Church teaches that humans are saved from sin by the whole work of Jesus on earth, which was completed by his death, resurrection and ascension. The following pages focus on these events.

## The Crucifixion

After being arrested and facing trials in front of the high priest and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, Jesus was taken to be crucified. Crucifixion was a slow, painful and much dreaded method of execution used by the Romans. Carried out in public, it involved the victim being nailed or tied to a cross by his wrists and feet, and left to hang there until he died. Jesus was crucified at about 9 am and died at about 3 pm.

### To do...

Read the account of Jesus' crucifixion in Mark chapter 15 verses 21-39.

The account takes up the story after Jesus has been put on trial, condemned to death by the Roman governor Pilate, and is on the way to be crucified.

#### Some extra information which may be helpful as you read:

**Cyrene** was a city in north Africa.

**Golgotha** is a hill just outside Jerusalem, where executions were carried out.

The crowd misinterpret what Jesus cried out as a call for **Elijah**, who was one of the prophets of the Old Testament, to come to save him.

A **centurion** was an officer in the Roman army.

The **curtain** in the temple was probably one which separated the Holy of Holies (the holiest part of the temple, which was only visited by the High Priest once a year) from the rest of the building. The tearing of the curtain is sometimes seen as representing the removal by Jesus' death of the barrier which human sin placed between God and humans, giving them direct access to God through Jesus.


### To do...


 How was Jesus mocked as he was on the cross?

One of the ways in which the crowd mocked Jesus was to say '...save yourself, and come down from the cross!' Christians believe that by following the will of God, remaining on the cross and dying, Jesus made it possible for others to be saved. For Christians, Jesus crucifixion is an act of redemption which repairs the broken relationship between God and humans.



### To do...

 Why is the crucifixion so important for Christians?

 Christians may wear a cross or a crucifix as a symbol of their faith. Explain what it might mean to them.


### Jesus' death, atonement and salvation


Christians believe that Jesus is the saviour of the world. His death on the cross was redemption for human sinfulness and makes their salvation possible. This in turn means that they are part of God's kingdom on earth and in eternity.

Some see salvation as God's free gift to people who are Christians. Others believe that behaving well and living as they believe God wants them to is essential for their salvation. Catholics believe that living as God intended is only possible through the free gift of salvation that Jesus achieved by his life, death and resurrection.

Some, especially Catholics, believe that being baptised and taking part in the sacraments are also essential in achieving salvation.

### To do...

 Take each of the events covered on these pages and explain how it is redemptive for Christians.

 Is there any one of these events without which redemption would still be possible? Explain your answer.

## The Resurrection

After Jesus died his body was taken down and laid in a tomb, a cave which had a large stone rolled across the doorway to seal it. Very early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene, who was one of Jesus' followers, came to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices, according to the custom of the time. John describes how she was surprised by what she found.

The other disciple, who is not named, is traditionally identified with John, the author of the Gospel.

The linen wrappings were what Jesus' body had been wrapped in for burial.

### To do...

#### Highlight:

- the message that the angels give
- how Peter reacts when he found out that the tomb was empty
- who Mary Magdalene initially mistakes Jesus for
- what Jesus says that Mary should tell 'his brothers', the disciples

*Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and **the other disciple**, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the **linen wrappings** lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.*

*But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.*

**John chapter 20 verses 1-18**

### To do...

The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus rose again to \_\_\_\_\_ after \_\_\_\_\_ days.

For Christians, the \_\_\_\_\_ proves that Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_, because no-one but God can \_\_\_\_\_ death. Jesus had risen from the dead \_\_\_\_\_ – he was not a \_\_\_\_\_ apparition. Christians believe that God has power over death and that death is not the end of their \_\_\_\_\_. They believe that they will experience resurrection (life after death) as well.

physically ghost existence God life resurrection three conquer

## The Ascension



The book of Acts was written by the same author as Luke's Gospel. It contains an account of Jesus' ascension which describes how Jesus was taken up into heaven, as witnessed by his disciples. It took place 40 days after the resurrection.

*So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'*

**Acts chapter 1 verses 6-11**

The significance of the ascension for Christians is that it is the end of Jesus' time on earth. Christians believe this means his mission, or reason for being on earth, was complete and successful. Christians also believe that Jesus' ascension prepared the way for the Holy Spirit to come to earth, as Jesus had promised at the Last Supper.

### To do...

-  Before he ascends to heaven, what role does Jesus give to the disciples?
-  What do the men in white robes (usually thought of as angels) say will happen at some point in the future?

## Pentecost


The book of Acts describes how ten days after the Ascension, the disciples receive the gift of the Holy Spirit:


*When the day of **Pentecost** had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

**Acts chapter 2 verses 1-4**


**Pentecost was a Jewish feast remembering the giving of the ten commandments to Moses. It is celebrated by Christians to remember the arrival of the Holy Spirit.**

### To do...

 Look back at the story of the Ascension. What does Jesus say about the Holy Spirit?

 The arrival of the Holy Spirit equipped and empowered the disciples to begin preaching the message of Jesus. How would that have helped them to fulfil the role which Jesus gives to them in the account of the Ascension?

### To do...

 In the hymn *Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven*, one line refers to Christians being 'ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven'.

Using all that you have learned about the Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost, explain Christian beliefs about how Christians believe that they can be 'ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven'.

# Prayer

## Why do Christians pray 'your kingdom come'?

In the gospel accounts of his life, Jesus prays often. He taught his disciples to pray using the Lord's Prayer. Catholics see this prayer as a model that includes Adoration, Thanksgiving, Confession and Supplication (**ACTS**).

- **Adoration** - Catholics are encouraged to begin their prayer by adoring and praising God for who he is and for all that he has done. Catholics believe that God delights in praise.
- **Confession** - Catholics acknowledge to God that they have done things that were wrong. It's a time for them to express sorrow about what they have said, thought, or done that was not pleasing to God. They ask God to forgive them and they believe that he does so freely.
- **Thanksgiving** - being thankful to God for his love, protection and forgiveness.
- **Supplication and intercession** - praying for their needs and for the needs of others, such as friends, family, the sick, priests, missionaries, government leaders and persecuted Christians around the world. They may also pray for such things as God's guidance, wisdom, and opportunities to serve.

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus teaches his followers the prayer which is usually known as either the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. This prayer has been used since the very earliest days of Christianity and is still widely used today, both in private prayer and in church services.

*Our Father, in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts  
as we have also forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but deliver us from the evil one.*

**Matthew chapter 6 verses 9–13**

### To do...

 Use 'A', 'C', 'T' and 'S' to label the different parts of the 'Our Father' prayer.

One of the supplications in the Lord's Prayer is:

*Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.*

**Matthew chapter 6 verses 10**

The 'Kingdom of God' isn't a kingdom in the normal sense, with territory and borders. Rather, it is a way of speaking about God's spiritual reign on earth, both now and in the future. Anywhere God's will is being done, and where God is recognised as being in charge, could be seen as being an indication of the Kingdom of God.

Christians believe that the Kingdom of God on earth


- began with the ministry of Jesus
- grows in the lives of Christians as they try to live in accordance with Jesus' teachings
- is demonstrated as Christians affect the world around them for good
- will fully be completed when Jesus returns

So, when Christians pray 'your kingdom come', they are

- asking God to change the world through them, so that life on earth now is more like how God wants it to be
- looking forward to the completion of God's Kingdom through Jesus' return

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus teaches his followers the prayer which is usually known as either the Lord's Prayer or the Our Father. This prayer has been used since the very earliest days of Christianity and is still widely used today, both in private prayer and in church services.

### **To do...**

 Use the space below to design a diagram which explains what Christians mean by 'the Kingdom of God'.

# Mary as a model for the Church

## What is the significance of Mary as a model for the Church?

Catholics hold Mary, the mother of Jesus, in great honour. Often, they refer to her as Mary, Mother of God, or simply as 'Our Lady'. Her statue will be found in every Catholic church, in shrines and other holy places.

Luke's Gospel describes how Mary was chosen to be the human mother of God the Son, Jesus Christ. In this passage, the angel Gabriel informs her of this, an event known as the Annunciation.




Fundamental to the Christian faith is the belief that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born a human being. Catholics believe that, in her role as Jesus' human mother, Mary is a key participant in the salvation of Christians.

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.*



**Luke chapter 1 verses 26-38**

### To do...


As you read the story of the annunciation, highlight:

-  The greeting that Gabriel gives to Mary
-  The message he brings from God
-  Mary's response to what the angel says

### To do...

-  What does Gabriel say that Mary's son will be like?
  
-  Why is Mary surprised?

## To do...

 Mary responds to the angel by saying 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' She was not forced to be Jesus' mother, she willingly agreed.

Do you think that was easy or difficult for her to do?

Catholics believe that God caused Mary to be born free from original sin so that she would be fit to be the Mother of God. Catholics call this the **immaculate conception**.

Catholics also believe that at the end of her life Mary did not die but that her body was assumed, or taken up, into heaven. This is called the **Assumption**.

As Mary has such a special relationship with God, Catholics believe that she acts as a **mediator** between them and God. Catholics do not pray to Mary in the same way that they pray to God. They believe that she intercedes with God for them. Catholics will light a votive candle and place by her statue in church as part of their prayers.

Most Protestants do not share these beliefs, though they often respect Mary and might consider her to be an outstanding example of a life dedicated to God.

## The Hail Mary

The Hail Mary is based on the words said by the angel at the Annunciation. This prayer is said by Catholics at every Mass and is central to of the rosary, so Catholics say the Hail Mary regularly, either on their own or with others.

*Hail Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.*

*Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,  
Jesus.*

*Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,*

*now and at the hour of our death.*

*Amen*

The prayer starts with the annunciation and gives honour to Mary.

It addresses her as holy and blessed.


It gives praise to Jesus.

It asks her to intercede on behalf of the person saying the Hail Mary.



## To do...

Reread the Annunciation (see p.37). How does the Hail Mary reflect the words of the angel Gabriel?

 For Catholics, Mary is a role model of how to follow Jesus. Use both of the passages in this topic to help you to explain how Mary's example might inspire or guide Catholics as they try to:

serve God

be charitable and self-giving

## The Magnificat

*And Mary said:*


*My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has looked with favour  
of the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones  
and lifted up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
According to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and his descendants for ever.*

**Luke chapter 1 verses 46-55**

The Magnificat is a hymn of praise by Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is found in Luke's gospel when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, wants to visit her cousin Elizabeth to tell her about the pregnancy. Elizabeth was also pregnant – her baby would be St. John the Baptist.

It is named after the first word of its first line in Latin ('Magnificat anima mea Dominum,' or 'My soul magnifies the Lord'. In this sense, 'magnify' means to praise God greatly. Mary's Magnificat is a song of praise, joy and thanksgiving, and her response to what God had asked of her.



### To do...

-  In the text, highlight where Mary expresses praise to God, her joy and her thankfulness, using three different colours.




The Magnificat is sung each day at evening prayer, or vespers, in Catholic churches. It is a prayer of deep trust in God. Christians believe that it reflects the values of God's Kingdom, in which God cares for the weak and the vulnerable.

Mary was a woman living in a male-oriented society. She almost certainly came from a poor background. The country she lived in was under occupation by the Romans. She was pregnant outside marriage in a culture in which that was severely frowned upon.

### To do...

-  Write a modern version of the Magnificat. Take each line or stanza and think of a creative way to restate what Mary is saying.
-  Look back at the Beatitudes on p.20. What common ground can you see between the Magnificat and Jesus' message in the Beatitudes? Write your thoughts next to the relevant place in the passage.

### To do...

-  Is the Magnificat the sort of song which you would have expected someone like Mary to have sung?
-  What changes to the way society works does the Magnificat call for?
-  How does Mary's pregnancy show Christians that God was already at work on making those changes come about?

# Eschatology

## What do Catholics believe about what happens after death?




In Christianity, **eschatology** is the study of what happens at the 'end times' or the 'end of the world'. This includes death, judgement, heaven and hell.

John's Gospel describes how Jesus visits Martha, Mary and Lazarus, who were among his close friends. Their brother, Lazarus, has been dead four days.

In the course of the story, Martha identified Jesus as the Messiah. Prophecies in the Old Testament foretell the coming of a saviour known as the Messiah. They include that he would be a descendant of the Old Testament hero King David, and that he would be a saviour for God's people. One of the central beliefs in Christianity is that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he fulfilled those prophecies. The Greek translation of Messiah is 'Christos', which is why Jesus is known as Christ.

### To do...

Highlight:

-  How long has Lazarus been dead?
-  What does Jesus say will happen to Lazarus?
-  What does Jesus say about resurrection?

*When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the **tomb** four days. Now **Bethany** was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that **he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day**.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the **Messiah**, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'*

**John chapter 11 verses 17-27**

In Jesus' time, dead bodies were sometimes placed in a tomb carved out of the rock, rather than buried in a grave.

Bethany is the name of the village where Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived.


In Jesus' time, many Jews believed that the dead would be resurrected at the end of time.

The story goes on to describe Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

### To do...

The Nicene Creed, used in the Liturgy for the Mass, ends with the words

**... and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

 How might a Catholic explain this belief to someone else, using the accounts of the resurrection of Lazarus and Jesus' resurrection?


### To do...

 One of the key characters in this story is Martha, the sister of Lazarus.  
How does Martha's understanding about Jesus change during the course of the story?

Many of the letters (also known as epistles) in the New Testament were written by Paul, an early Christian missionary and preacher. He had been travelling around the Mediterranean world teaching about Jesus and establishing churches for around ten years when he wrote his first letters to a group of Christians in Corinth, in Greece. It was probably written in 53 or 54AD, about twenty-five years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

In it, Paul explains what Jesus' death and resurrection mean for Christians.

**To do...**


 Read one of the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Very often the first witnesses of the Resurrection do not recognise Jesus. Does Paul's writing in 1 Corinthians help you to explain this?

*So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.*

**1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 42-44**

Most Christians understand this passage to mean that God will take a human, perishable body and in the resurrection make it an imperishable and eternal one, and that Paul's references to a 'spiritual' body don't mean one which doesn't have a physical form.

**To do...**

 How does Paul describe the body when it is 'sown', and 'raised'?

At death - 'sown'	When raised to life
perishable	imperishable

Christians believe that it is the death and resurrection of Jesus which makes possible the promise of new life to them.

## The Rich Man and Lazarus

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable told by Jesus. Jesus wasn't describing an actual event – this is a story with symbolic meaning about how, Christians believe, how they act in this life influences how they will be judged by God. The character in this story named Lazarus is not the same Lazarus from the story from John's Gospel which we started this topic with.

In this passage, it is Jesus who is speaking.

Jesus seems to use being carried away by the angels as a metaphor for going to heaven. Abraham is an Old Testament character, the forefather of the Jewish people.

Hades is the underworld, often understood to mean Hell.

When Abraham says "They have Moses and the prophets", he is referring to the Old Testament. Moses is traditionally thought to have been one of the authors of the Old Testament, and the prophetic books can also be found there.


*'There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was **carried away by the angels to be with Abraham.***

*The rich man also died and was buried. In **Hades**, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house— for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "**They have Moses and the prophets;** they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."*


**Luke chapter 16 verses 19-31**


### To do...

 What was Lazarus' earthly life like?

 What was his afterlife like?

### To do...

 What was the rich man's earthly life like?

 What was his afterlife like?

## Keywords...

**Judgement** - The belief that each individual will be held to account by God for the things they do, or don't do, while they are alive.


**Heaven** - Those who have accepted God's love and grace will enjoy eternal existence in God's presence. This experience of God is what Catholics call 'heaven'.

**Hell** - Those who reject God, his forgiveness and love will live outside of God's love for eternity. This lack of God is called hell.

Christians believe that once judgement happens, people will either be in **Heaven** or **Hell** for all eternity.

Christians believe that each individual will be held to account by God for the things they do, or fail to do, during their lives, taking responsibility for their own actions. The reward will be eternal happiness in the presence of God. The punishment will be separation from God in hell. Hell is sometimes described as a place of punishment and fire. These are attempts to describe something we cannot fully understand.

## To do...

 'When Christians do good deeds, it is because they love God, not because they fear his judgement'. Using what you have learned, evaluate this statement. Try to refer to Christian teachings and Bible passages where you can.

# Notes



