

1.3.1 Worship

Worship – Act of religious praise and devotion. Honouring God.

Liturgical worship – Church service that follows a **set order and structure**.

Informal worship – Type of non-liturgical worship that is spontaneous, e.g. Quaker and Pentecostal worship.

Private worship – when a person worships God by themselves.

Why different types of worship are used

- **Home** - the home is the heart of people's lives, and worshipping as a family brings the family together.
- **Private** – this allows people to communicate with God one to one, and express emotions, they may not be able to express in front of others.
- **Informal**- Helps to realise that worship can take place anywhere, anyway.
- **Public** – creates a sense of belonging to a whole community, give opportunity to feel the strength of faith and make friends with other believers.

1.3.2 Sacraments

Sacraments – Christian **ritual where believers receive God's grace** (free gift of love). Roman Catholics practice 7 sacraments. Most Protestants only have 2 (which are based on the teachings of Jesus – baptism and Eucharist) and some do not have any.

Baptism – Christian sacrament representing entrance into the Christian faith.

Infant baptism – aka Christening. Some Christians (Anglican and Roman Catholic) baptise infants by pouring water on a baby's forehead. They believe that this removes **original sin** and means a baby can now enter **heaven**.

Believers' baptism – Other Christians *e.g. Baptists) practice believers' baptism by immersing an adult into a pool of water. They believe that a person should be old enough to choose for themselves.

Eucharist – aka **Holy Communion**. Christian sacrament that uses bread and wine to **re-enact the Last Supper** and **commemorate the death and resurrection of Christ**.

Some Christians (e.g. Catholics) believe that the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Jesus when blessed. This is because Jesus said, '**This is my body**'. In these churches people come to the front to receive communion from the priest, usually in the form of a wafer and some alcoholic wine drunk from a single cup.

Other Christians (e.g. Protestants) believe that the bread and wine are **symbols** of Christ's sacrifice. In some churches (Non-conformists) bread is usually set on a table alongside non-alcoholic wine in small cups and anyone who wishes can take some.

1.3.3 Prayer

Prayer – Speaking to God.

Set prayers – Prayers that are written down and used by many Christians.

The Lord's Prayer – Set prayer taught by Jesus aka the '**Our Father**

Informal Prayer – made up by the person using their own words.

Prayer

All Christians pray because it is a way of forming a relationship with God. You would not have a relationship with anybody else and not talk to them or spend time with them, and it is the same for Christians.

Sometimes Christians will use a set prayer like the "Lord's Prayer" or Roman Catholics might say the "Hail Mary." They will also use prayer as a way of communicating with God about issues that concern them and asking for guidance. Christians can also use prayer as a response to global issues or events that shock the world, as a way to find comfort as well as provide support for others.

Christians may wish to ask for something, to say sorry for something, to say thank you or to just acknowledge God's greatness.

1.3.4 Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage – A journey made to a holy site for religious reasons. It is recorded in the Gospel of Luke that Jesus went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem – Christians go to Jerusalem to visit the key sites from the death and resurrection of Jesus. For example, the **via Dolorosa** (the path Jesus took to the crucifixion), **the Cenacle** (site of the Last Supper), **the Church of the Holy Sepulchre** (the church built on Golgotha believed to be the site of the crucifixion) and **the Garden Tomb** (believed to be the burial and resurrection site).

Iona – Scottish Island where Christians of all denominations go to **pray, read the Bible and meditate**.

Lourdes – Site of Catholic pilgrimage in France where St Bernadette is believed to have seen visions of the Virgin Mary. Pilgrims go there for **physical and spiritual healing**.

1.3.5 Celebrations

Advent – the preparation period before Christmas when Christians **prepare** for the coming of Jesus, often by lighting Advent wreaths and candles.

Christmas – Christian festival celebrating the **incarnation of Jesus**. Christians light candles, attend Midnight Mass and give each other cards and presents.

The significance of Christmas

- It celebrated the incarnation of God. Without his birth there would be no Christianity.
- Through the incarnation it is now possible to have a full relationship with God, and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus cancelled out the punishment for sin, and allows Christians to go to heaven

Easter – The most important Christian festival as it **commemorates the death and resurrection of Christ**. Christians attend mass, pray and light candles. **Flowers and eggs** are given to symbolise new life.

The significance of Holy Week

- Christians can renew and deepen their faith remembering the last days of Jesus. They are reminded to serve others, put themselves last and be witnesses to faith.
- They are reminded how Jesus' adulation on Palm Sunday went to rejection and crucifixion. This helps Christians to stand up for others.

1.3.7 Importance of the local church

The local church helps members of its community in many ways, looking after their **physical** and **spiritual** needs. This can be done in many ways;

Food banks – The Trussell Trust is a Christian Charity that provides **emergency food for people in crisis**.

Street pastors – Street pastors are a **group of Christian volunteers who provide free help and support** to people, especially those who are out on a Friday or Saturday night.

How and why the local church helps the individual believer

A local church provides the individual believer with;

- A chance to worship.
- An opportunity to partake in the sacraments.
- A place where they can deepen their faith through sermons, discussion and bible groups.
- A Christian fellowship with fellow Christians.

The church does this because it believes that it is part of the Body of Christ and that it must welcome, nurture and provide spiritual sustenance for fellow members of Christ's body.

1.3.6 Future of the Church

Mission – A vocation or calling to spread the teachings of Jesus. Based on Jesus' **Great Commission**.

Evangelism – Spreading the teachings of Jesus. This can be locally through things like the **Alpha** course or globally through missionary work.

Church Growth – Church attendance is falling in the UK, but is increasing rapidly in place like Africa. If Evangelism and missionary work is not carried out the Christian faith could ultimately end.

Jesus' last commandment to the disciples was; *'He said to them, 'Go into the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved...'* **Mark 16:15**. *'Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'* **John 20:21**.

Not all Christians believe that missionary work is relevant today as some Christians see it as a form of racism, and not of loving your neighbour.

1.3.8 the worldwide Church

Persecution – Christians in places like **North Korea** and **Syria** are being persecuted by being **attacked, forced to pay extra taxes or forbidden from certain jobs**. The worldwide Church responds to this by **smuggling Bibles, sending money** and encouraging Christians to show **love and forgiveness**.

Reconciliation – The worldwide Church has a mission **to heal people's relationship with God and with one another**. They do this through initiatives such as the **Irish Churches Peace Project** that aim to develop peace and understanding.

Charity – the Christian Churches are very involved in **charity** work across the globe. They support charities such as **Christian Aid** and **Tearfund** both of which provide aid and support for people living in charity in the UK and globally.

St Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians and the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats are the basis for Christian ideas on charity. **Corinthians 13:4-7** *'Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.'* He ended his teaching on spiritual gifts with, **1 Corinthians 13:13**, *'So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.'*

1.4.1 Origin and value of the universe

Christians believe that **God created the universe from nothing**. The creation story in **Genesis** describes how God made the universe in six days. Because God created the universe from nothing and said that it was **good**, it means that the universe has special value and meaning.

Big Bang Theory – a **theory** in astronomy: the universe originated billions of years ago in an explosion from a single point of nearly infinite energy density.

Fundamentalist Christians believe that the universe was created in exactly the way it is described in **Genesis** and therefore other accounts (i.e. the Big Bang theory) are wrong.

Liberal Christians believe that the Genesis account is **not literally true**. They believe it is a **metaphor**, so accept that Big Bang may be true if God started the Big Bang.

1.4.2 Sanctity of life

Sanctity of life – the belief that human life is **sacred / holy** because we are made in the **'image of God'**. Belief in this will have an effect upon the way Christians deal with a number of issues including abortion and euthanasia.

How life is shown as special in the Bible

- *'So God created mankind in his own image...'* Genesis 1:27. This shows that man is unique; man has a soul and is the only creature able to have a relationship with God.
- *'Then the Lord God formed a man from dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...'* Genesis 2:7. Human life is special as it comes directly from God.
- The special nature of human life is made clear by the commandment 'Do not Kill' Exodus 20:13.
- *'Do you not know that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you...?'* 1 Corinthians 6:19.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2258) also states that, *'Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God...'*

1.4.3 Origin and value of human life

The Genesis account is that **God created Adam** from **'the dust of the ground'** and breathed into his nostrils the **'breath of life'**. Later **God created Eve** from Adam's **'rib'**. **Fundamentalist Christians** believe that this account is literally true. **Liberal Christians** believe that it is a metaphor and that evolution was the **'tool'** that God used to create humanity.

Evolution – the process by which different kinds of living organism are believed to have developed from earlier forms during the history of the earth.

How Christians respond to evolution

- Creationists reject evolution and fossils as evidence of it. They claim that fossils are evidence of animals wiped out in Noah's flood, including dinosaurs which would have been too big to fit in the ark. They do not believe that any fossils show changes between species.
- Christians who believe in intelligent design, believe that evolution shows only changes within the species that God created, as written in Genesis. They do not show changes across species, Darwin was only able to show how finches beaks changed, not changes across species.
- Some Christians who believe in intelligent design believe that the complex nature of evolution shows evidence of God creating species so that they could develop. They also believe that human life is so different from other species (even apes) that it must have been caused by direct intervention from God. Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna wrote in 2005, *'Evolution in the sense of common ancestry might be true, but evolution in the neo-Darwin sense – an unguided, unplanned process...is not'*

1.4.4 Abortion

Quality of life - how good or **comfortable** a person's life is or will be.

Roman Catholics are opposed to abortion in all circumstances because they believe that **life begins at conception** and therefore abortion is murder and against the commandment **'You shall not murder'**. It also violates the **sanctity of life**. *"Human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception...Abortion... [is an] abominable crime...The law must provide appropriate penal sanctions for every deliberate violation of the child's rights"* Catechisms of the Catholic Church 2273.

The **Church of England** believes that abortion is sometimes the **lesser of two evils** because Jesus taught **'love thy neighbour'**. Examples might include cases of rape or incest. *"Methodists would strongly prefer that through advances in medical science and social welfare, all abortions should become unnecessary. But termination as early as possible in the course of pregnancy may be the lesser of evils."* Statement from the Methodist Church of England and Wales.

Humanists and atheists believe that abortion should be available as it should be the woman's choice as to what she does with her body.

1.4.5 Death and the afterlife

There are many Christian reasons to believe in the afterlife (see topic 1.1.6).

Why Christians believe in life after death

Christians believe that life is not all there is. It is believed that God will reward, and punish the bad in some form of life after death. All Christians believe in life after death because;

- **The Resurrection of Jesus** all 4 Gospels state (although slightly differently) that Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. On the Sunday he came back to life, and the New Testament records a wide range of “appearance” stories. If Jesus came back from the dead, Christians believe there is life after death.

But there are also many non-religious reasons to believe as well. **Reincarnation** (or remembered lives), **medium** and the **spirit world**, and evidence of **near death experiences** are all considered by some to be evidence of an afterlife.

Other reasons why people might believe in life after death are;

- It gives purpose and meaning to life, something to aim for
- It gives comfort when a loved one dies, it is almost impossible to believe that they are gone forever.
- In order to get justice there has to be some reward / punishment in the afterlife for those that have been good / bad.

1.4.7 Euthanasia

Quality of life - how good or **comfortable** a person’s life is or will be.

Most **Christians** are against all forms of euthanasia except **passive** (switching off life support machines, as death can already be proved to have occurred) as they think that it against the **sanctity of life**, the Commandment **‘You shall not murder’** and against **God’s plans** for a person. **Evangelical** Christians are against all forms of euthanasia for the same reasons.

Christians using **situation ethics** may accept some forms of euthanasia as the most loving thing to do, and Jesus taught **‘love thy neighbour’**.

Atheists and Humanists are divided on the issue. Some believe that it is acceptable as the person may have no **quality of life**, but others think that it puts people in a vulnerable position and should remain illegal.

“The use of painkillers to alleviate the suffering of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed either as an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable.” Catechism of the Catholic Church 2279

1.4.6 Non-religious arguments against life after death

Many non-religious people do not believe in the afterlife as they do not believe that there is sufficient **evidence** of one and suggest that the different teachings from different religions suggest that they cannot be true. The Bible is too contradictory about life after death, and there is insufficient proof of the resurrection of Jesus. Near-death experiences are unreliable; people have fallible memories. Evidence of remembered lives is also suspicious as investigations show that in only 11 of approx. 1111 reported cases, there was no contact with the other family, and 7 of the eleven were also flawed in other ways.

Christians reject these non-religious arguments because;

- Christianity is the one true religion, and what it, and the Bible, says can be trusted. The other holy books do not matter.
- The biblical record of the resurrection can be trusted.
- The disciples must have known the resurrection happened – they would not have risked their lives for something that they knew to be a lie.
- Philosophers such as Rene Descartes have shown that the mind is separate from the body.
- Heaven is a spiritual dimension, outside but interacting with the material universe.

1.4.8 The natural world

Stewardship – the belief that the earth is God’s and we have a **responsibility** to look after it. A Bible quote to support this view is **‘The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.’**

Dominion – the belief that humans have been given (in the Book of Genesis) the earth to **rule over**.

Most Christians believe that God gave humans the responsibility to care for the earth (**stewardship**), to preserve its natural resources and to avoid pollution. In the past, some Christians have interpreted the teaching of **dominion** over the earth to mean they could do whatever they want to it, but few believe that today.

Animal experimentation – **Most Christians** support animal experimentation if it could save human lives, because they believe that humans are made in God’s **image** and have a **soul** and are therefore more important than animals. They do not believe that animals should be experimented on without good reason or for cosmetic purposes. There are **a few** Christians who believe that as God gave humans **‘dominion’** over the animals they can be used however humans want.

Use of animals for food. Most Christians believe that **Gog gave humans animals for food** and so have no problem with using animals for food.

2.2.1 Justice

Muslims believe that crime is rarely justified as it breaks the rules of God as set down in the Qur'an.

Justice – means bringing about what is right or fair. Muslims believe that **God is the ultimate judge**.

Justice is important to Humanists and atheist because;

1. So that people know how to behave properly
2. To protect the weak from the strong
3. So that society can be organised.

Why Justice is important for Muslims

- The Qur'an says that God is just, 4 of the 99 names are connected to God's justice.
- Islamic teachings on the Last Day are about reward and punishment. God will reward the good and punish the bad on the Last Day. If Muslims do not work for justice they may be sent to hell.
- *And act justly. Truly God loves those who are just* **Surah 49:9**. This is from the Qur'an so important for Muslims to follow.
- The Hadith tells Muslims to be just, and Muslims should follow the example of Muhammad. *People, beware of injustice, for injustice shall be darkness on the Day of Judgement.*

2.2.2 Crime

Nature of crime – an act against the law. This might be a violent crime or a cybercrime.

Reasons for crime – there are many reasons for crime, including **poverty, upbringing, drugs, and low self-esteem**.

Muslims are against crime as they break the laws of God. They will try to alleviate the causes of criminality in a number of ways;

- *Poverty* – religiously Muslims ban the use of charging interest, they encourage Muslims to share wealth. Politically Muslims are encouraged to vote for parties with politics that aimed at removing poverty.
- *Upbringing* – Muslims are encouraged in the way they raise their children. They are told that they will be judged on this on the Last Day. They should teach their children the difference between right and wrong. Mosques provide support and advice for parents with problems.
- *Alcohol and drugs* – both of these are prohibited (haram) in Islam, as the Qur'an says that they are the way Satan will keep people from God. Muhammad never drank alcohol and told others not to, Muslims should also have nothing to do with the production or sale of alcohol.
- *Self-esteem* - having the belief that you are a vicegerent of God, with a special duty in the world should lead to high self-esteem, but knowing that you will be judged by God on the Last Day means that you should not have too high an opinion of yourself.

2.2.3 Good, evil & suffering

Remember the problem of evil and suffering from 1.1.7.

Good actions are divided into groups;

- **Fard** – actions which must be performed, such as the 5 pillars, following Shari'ah law. These actions will be rewarded; not doing them will be punished.
- **Manub** – Actions which will be rewarded, but not punished if not done.
- **Mubah** – permitted actions due to nothing said against them in the Qur'an / hadith. They are neither rewarded nor punished.

Evil actions are known as **haram**, 'that which is forbidden'. Anything forbidden in the Qur'an, hadith or Shari'ah (e.g. drinking alcohol, gambling) are haram.

The Muslim answer to why people suffer

'It is We who have sent down the Qur'an to thee by stages. Therefore be patient with the constancy to the command of thy Lord, and hearken not to the sinner or the ingrate among them' **Surah 76:23-24**.

This shows that because God is so much greater than humans we cannot possibly understand his motives, and just have to accept what He does. The Qur'an says God is good, and only wants good, therefore there must be reasons for evil and suffering, but humans cannot understand them.

2.2.4 Attitudes to punishment

Muslim teachings about punishment

The Qur'an sets down punishment for certain crimes, and Muslims should not commit crimes as they are sins against God. Muslims who do will be punished on earth and at the final judgment.

Punishments in the Qur'an are called hadd. There are 6 crimes with fixed punishments in the Qur'an and hadith;

- theft – amputation of hand.
- Illicit sexual relations – death by stoning or 100 lashes.
- Making unproven accusations of illicit sex – 80 lashes.
- Drinking intoxicants – 80 lashes.
- Apostasy (abandoning or renouncing Muslim beliefs) – death or banishment.
- Highway robbery – death.

These have strict requirements for evidence, and are not often applied. Most Muslim countries operate a punishment system similar to that in Europe. Saudi Arabia, and areas under Taliban, ISIS or ultra-conservative Muslim rule, do apply these hadd punishments, because they are set down in the Qur'an or Sunnah; *'As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from God, for their crime.'* **Surah 5:41**.

The Qur'an does allow for the perpetrator and victim to agree an amount of compensation instead of the punishment. Justice and punishment should be given equitably to Muslims and non-Muslims, although it would be preferable for non-Muslims to use their own legal systems.