

# Christianity Practices

## Topics covered:

1. Worship
2. Prayer
3. Baptism

4. Holy Communion
5. Pilgrimage
6. Festivals
7. Foodbanks

8. Street Pastors
9. Mission and evangelism
10. Church growth
11. Worldwide Church

12. Persecution
13. World poverty

**Remember:** if a question is asking you for similar beliefs it is asking for two of the same (either for or against). If it is asking you for contrasting, they need to be different (one for and one against).

## 7. Foodbanks

- ✓ The Church consists of a group of believers under the leadership of Jesus.

**'And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body'. Ephesians 1:22-23**

- ✓ The role of the Church is not confined to the building. The Church is a major source of social services like schooling and medical care.
- ✓ It has become involved in projects that help the local community. It fits with the teachings to act with compassion to those in need.

**'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink'. Matthew 25:35**

### **The Trussell Trust:**

- ✓ Founded in 1977, provides emergency food, help and support to people in crisis in the UK.
- ✓ The aim is to bring people together to work towards ending poverty and hunger in Britain.
- ✓ Non-perishable food is donated to the foodbanks and is sorted by volunteers.
- ✓ Professionals identify people in crisis and give them a voucher for three days of food.
- ✓ Some provide courses designed to help people to eat well and spend less.
- ✓ There are around 420 foodbanks in the UK and in a year they provide food for nearly 1,000,000 people.

### **The Oasis Project:**

- ✓ A community hub in Plymouth with an internet café, creative courses, a job club, training opportunities and a base for meetings.
- ✓ Also runs a food bank.
- ✓ Paid staff are supported by volunteers and session tutors.
- ✓ Around 200 people use the centre each week and both spiritual and practical support are given to those who need it.
- ✓ They help people who have ill health, learning disabilities, domestic violence, substance abuse, low income and housing problems.

## 9. Mission and evangelism

- ✓ The Church has a mission to spread the good news to non-believers that Jesus is the Son of God and came to the world to be its saviour.
- ✓ Christians are called not only to know Jesus in their lives but also to make him known to others as Jesus instructed.
- ✓ Christians have the responsibility to tell others of their faith. This may be spreading the word to people they meet in everyday life or, for some, through organised events or preaching.
- ✓ Others feel called to go to other countries and become **missionaries**, which involves evangelism and in some cases humanitarian work.
- ✓ The main aim is to persuade people to accept Jesus as their Saviour and to extend the Church to every nation of the world.

**'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations'. Matthew 28:19**

### **The Alpha course:**

- ✓ The aim was to help church members understand the basics of the faith but soon began to be used as an introduction for those in learning about Christianity.
- ✓ It is designed to be 'an opportunity to explore the meaning of life' through a series of talks and discussions.

## 12. Christian Persecution

- ✓ The international society for human rights, claims that 80 percent of all acts of religious discrimination in the world today are directed at Christians.
- ✓ The persecution ranges from forcing Christians to pay an extra tax, not allowing them to have good jobs or build churches, attacks on their homes and family and sometimes murder.
- ✓ It is believed that many thousands of Christians are killed each year because of their faith.
- ✓ It 2015 it was reported that the ten countries where the most serious persecution was taking place are: North Korea, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran, Pakistan, Eritrea and Nigeria.
- ✓ Jesus told Christians to expect persecution from the world because if they persecuted him they would persecute his followers too.

**'Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'. 2 Timothy 3:12**

- ✓ The World Council of Churches has a programme to try and bring about the reconciliation between Christians of different denominations and members of other faiths
- ✓ When their beliefs are challenged Christians have to decide whether or not to be fully committed to the faith.
- ✓ Whether faced with verbal or physical abuse, Christians are still encouraged to show love.
- ✓ The Church campaigns on behalf of those persecuted and supports them where possible.

**'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good'. Romans 12:21**

**'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it'. 1 Corinthians 12:26**

**If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also'. Matthew 5:39**

## 8. Street Pastors

- ✓ The network of street pastors in Brixton was an initiative of Ascension Trust, a Christian charity, where Christian adult volunteers receive training in order to patrol the streets in urban areas.
- ✓ Initially the main aim was to challenge gang culture, the use of knives and guns in London. The focus then widened to include responding to drunkenness, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- ✓ They aim to help and care for vulnerable people in practical ways. Their work includes giving guidance which might be able to help.
- ✓ Since 2003 they have grown rapidly and now operate in nearly 300 locations worldwide, with around 14,000 trained personnel.
- ✓ A sister organisation called School Pastors, was set up in 2011 with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour, illegal drug use and bullying.
- ✓ Within school, they mentor young people and patrol within and around schools to help prevent behaviour problems.
- ✓ The mission of the Church includes trying to make a positive contribution to the local community and being a good neighbour.

**'Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead'. James 2:17**

## 10. Church Growth

- ✓ Estimates of how many Christians there are in the world vary from 1.5 to 2.5 billion. Up to a third of the world's population claim to have some sort of Christian faith.
- ✓ In 2010 there were nearly 1.1 billion Catholics, a big increase on the estimated 291 million in 1910.
- ✓ Despite opposition from the government, it is estimated that in China there will soon be more Christians than in any other country of the world.
- ✓ In 1900 there were no Protestant churches in South Korea, now the capital city of Seoul alone has 7000.
- ✓ It is estimated that churches in Africa are increasing by an average of 34,000 people a day.
- ✓ Worldwide something like 80,000 people become Christians per day, and over 500 new churches are formed.

### **Discipleship:**

- ✓ The mission of sharing Christ does not end with people deciding to become Christians.
- ✓ The Great Commission described by Jesus was to make disciples, not just new believers.
- ✓ So it involves not only evangelism but also the training of new converts in the way of following Jesus.
- ✓ Each individual Christian has a part to play in spreading the faith and encouraging fellow believers.

## 11. Worldwide Church

- ✓ The primary mission of the worldwide Church is to proclaim that Jesus came so that the relationship between God and people can be restored.
- ✓ Christians believe that when Jesus died and rose again he saved humans from sin, and through his grace made it possible for humankind to be forgiven and become God's friends.
- ✓ The worldwide Church has a role to restore people's relationship with God and with one another.

**'For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life'. Romans 5:10**

### **Corrymeela Community:**

- ✓ Begun in 1965 to promote harmony and reconciliation.
- ✓ People from various backgrounds gather for a time of peace-building through the healing of social, religious and political divisions.
- ✓ Those who attend are given the opportunity to talk and listen to each other and explore ways of moving on from violence and distrust.

## 13. World Poverty

- ✓ Many Christian charities follow the teachings of Jesus in working to relieve poverty. **Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). When Jesus told a rich man to sell everything to give to the poor (Mark 10:21). The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).**
- ✓ Christians believe they should present Jesus to the world through helping the disadvantaged.

### **CAFOD:**

- ✓ The official agency of the Catholic Church.
- ✓ It brings hope and compassion to all people in poor communities such as Africa, Asia and South America.
- ✓ CAFOD helps to increase access to clean water, education and healthcare, and lobbies employers to adopt fair working conditions.
- ✓ CAFOD acts with local organisations to provide food, water and shelter for people.

### **Christian Aid:**

- ✓ Begun in 1945 they aim to encourage sustainable development, stop poverty, and provide emergency relief.
- ✓ They campaign with the Fairtrade Foundation, Stop Climate Chaos and Trade Justice Movement.
- ✓ They are members of the ACT alliance which provide emergency food aid, shelter, water, sanitation, and poverty reduction programmes.
- ✓ Their biggest fundraising event is the annual door-to-door collection in May.

### **Tearfund:**

- ✓ In 1968 Tearfund was set up when there was a terrible famine and in Nigeria.
- ✓ Tear fund's staff follow the example set by Jesus, travelling to places in great need, responding to disasters and helping vulnerable communities to transform out of poverty.
- ✓ Across the UK, churches donate, hold fundraising events, pray and raise awareness of their work.
- ✓ In 2015 Tearfund worked with 90,522 churches.

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## 2. Prayer

- ✓ Prayer is communicating with God in silence our aloud.
- ✓ You can use set prayers or informal prayers.
- ✓ People may pray kneeling down sometimes with hands together. Others pray standing up.
- ✓ Christians believe that prayer will be answered by God but not always in the way the person would like.
- ✓ Private prayer and meditations allows Christians to find peace and a sense of communion with God in their everyday life.
- ✓ The Lord's prayer gives individual Christians a pattern for how to pray as it combines praising God and asking for their needs. This prayer is often said in Christian worship and tends to be said out loud by the whole congregation.

## 4. Holy Communion

- ✓ Is the sacrament that uses bread and wine to celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus and his resurrection.
- ✓ Also known as the **Eucharist**.
- ✓ For Catholics, the sacrifice of Jesus is made present again during the ritual and made real again for believers.
- ✓ For Churches who don't believe this is it still an important ceremony.
- ✓ Many Christians consider it to be the most important act of worship as it recalls the Last Supper of Jesus. **(Matthew 26:17-30)**
- ✓ When they celebrate Communion they give thanks to God for his great love in sending Jesus to save people from sin.
- ✓ Holy Communion is interpreted in different ways. For Catholics and Orthodox Christians, they believe the bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus.
- ✓ They believe by receiving Communion they believe that they become present in a mystical way at the death and resurrection of Jesus which saves them.
- ✓ Protestant Christians celebrate Communion as a reminder of Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper. The bread and wine are a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice and helps them to reflect on the meaning of Jesus' death.
- ✓ For many Christians, Holy Communion is at the centre of their lives and worship.
- ✓ They believe they receive God's grace by joining in the sacrifice of Jesus.
- ✓ It brings the community of believers together in unity and strengthens their commitment to the faith.
- ✓ Celebrating Holy Communion can give them support and encouragement.
- ✓ It calls Christians to put they love they have experienced from God into practice by loving others.
- ✓ They welcome everyone, regardless of age, gender or race and everyone is treated equally.
- ✓ It reminds Christians that whilst they break bread together there are many in the world who are starving.
- ✓ It encourages them to work for equality and justice for all people.
- ✓ They collect money during the service to support work being done in developing countries, the elderly, prisoners and the homeless.

**'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me'. 1 Corinthians.**

**This cup is the new covenant in my blood do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me'. 1 Corinthians.**

**'For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes'. 1 Corinthians.**

## 6. Festivals

- ✓ Important role in helping Christians remember the major events in the religious and to plan public worship.
- ✓ The Christian calendar has two main seasons: Advent. Christmas and Epiphany; Lent, Easter and Pentecost.

### Christmas;

- ✓ Commemorates the incarnation of Jesus.
- ✓ The celebrations last 12 days ending with the feast of Epiphany.
- ✓ Homes are decorated with lights to symbolise Jesus being the light of the world.
- ✓ Many churches hold carol services with reading from the Bible.
- ✓ It is seen as a time of 'peace and goodwill.'

### Easter:

- ✓ Most important festival. Celebrates Jesus rising from the dead.
- ✓ During the week leading up to Easter, Christians remember the events that lead to Jesus' death.
- ✓ Special services are held on the Friday to remember Jesus' crucifixion.
- ✓ On Easter Sunday, churches are filled with flowers and special hymns are sung celebrating the resurrection.
- ✓ Many churches organise open-air sunrise events and share breakfast together, often eggs which are a symbol of new life.

## 3. Baptism

- ✓ For many Churches baptism is the initiation rite by which people become members of the Christian Church.
- ✓ The person if formally acknowledged as a child of God and receives God's saving grace.
- ✓ Jesus' baptism set an example for his followers to be baptised in order to receive the Holy Spirit and begin a new life in the Christian community.

**'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Matthew 28:19**

### Infant baptism:

- ✓ Catholic, Anglican and other churches practice infant baptism.
- ✓ These Churches believe infant baptism is necessary because of original sin.
- ✓ Everyone has a tendency to sin and needs salvation, even babies.
- ✓ Infant baptism removed original sin. The child is welcomed into the Church as soon as possible.
- ✓ Blessed water is poured over the baby's head. God parents and parents promise to bring the child up in the faith.
- ✓ Other symbols are used to such as anointing with oil, the sign of the cross of the forehead and dressing the child in white.

### Believer's baptism:

- ✓ Some Christians thinking that a baby is too young to understand the meaning of baptism, so people should wait until they are old enough to make the decision.
- ✓ They believe baptism does not save a person; it is someone's conversion to living a life dedicated to Jesus which is important.
- ✓ It involves full emersion in to a pool, symbolising the cleaning from sin and rising up to a new life with Jesus.
- ✓ The minister usually talks about the importance of baptism.
- ✓ Each person may read a Bible passage or give a testimony of their faith in Jesus.
- ✓ The minister will baptise them in the pool in a similar way to Jesus' baptism.

## 4. Holy Communion

- ✓ There is a similar pattern in which most churches celebrate Holy Communion:
  - The ministry of the Word which focuses on God's word in the Bible.
  - The ministry of Holy Communion – offering, consecrating and sharing the bread and wine.

**USE YOUR REVISION GUIDES/NOTES TO LEARN HOW THE CHURCHES CELEBRATE COMMUNION!**

## 1. Worship

- ✓ Worship is the way in which Christians show their love, reverence and respect for God.
- ✓ It allows Christians to thank God for his blessings, ask for forgiveness or seek help.

### Liturgical worship:

- ✓ Follows the same set pattern.
- ✓ Priest leads the congregation.
- ✓ Bible passages are ready out and there may be a sermon.
- ✓ Often will be music, hymns sung and sometimes chanting by the priest.
- ✓ People receive God's forgiveness through the priest.
- ✓ People receive the living presence of Jesus in Communion.
- ✓ Bible readings follow the Christian calendar.
- ✓ A set order which is familiar to all even visitors.
- ✓ Has been passed down through generations giving a sense of tradition.

### Non-Liturgical worship:

- ✓ Does not have to be a set order or ritual.
- ✓ May choose an order to suit the theme.
- ✓ The service is usually focussed on Bible readings and sermons.
- ✓ The basic structure may remain the same or the preacher may change it.
- ✓ Follows worship of some early Christians.
- ✓ Faith is expressed in a variety of ways.
- ✓ Christians can share personal interpretations of the Bible.
- ✓ People take an active part by praying out loud or talking without training.
- ✓ May have more of an emotional impact, with a feeling of a personal revelation from god.

### Private worship:

- ✓ Allows individuals to spend time with God.
- ✓ Can happen either alone or with close friends or family.
- ✓ May involve prayer, meditation or studying.
- ✓ Sometimes includes aids such as an icon or rosary.

### Informal worship:

- ✓ Depends of people's spontaneous prayer or sharing of thoughts.
- ✓ Quaker worship is mainly silent.
- ✓ Some informal worship is 'charismatic' (led by the Spirit) and many involve dancing, singing and clapping.
- ✓ Some worshippers feel it is easier to experience God's Holy Spirit in informal worship.

## 5. Pilgrimage

- ✓ Pilgrimage is a journey made for religious reasons, alone or with other Christians, to a sacred place.
- ✓ They make a physical journey and a spiritual journey towards God.

### Importance of pilgrimage:

- ✓ Grow closer to God and strengthen faith
- ✓ Expresses sorrow for sin and be forgiven
- ✓ Reflect on their lives
- ✓ Pray for something special or thank God for a blessing

### Lourdes:

- ✓ In the south-west if France.
- ✓ Dedicated to Mary, the mother of Jesus.
- ✓ In 1858 a young girl had visions of Mary in a cave near the river.
- ✓ Mary told the girl to dig for a spring of water, which was discovered to have healing properties.
- ✓ Thousands of pilgrims visit to pray and the cave where she appeared and to bathe in the water where it is claimed that 67 miracles and over 6000 thousand other cures have taken place.

### Iona:

- ✓ An island off the west coast of Scotland.
- ✓ In the 6<sup>th</sup> century and Irish missionary who brought Christianity to Scotland established a small monastic community there.
- ✓ It is the home of the Iona Community and a place of Christian pilgrimage dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
- ✓ People believe it is a place where the veil between the spiritual place and physical place is thin.
- ✓ Many pilgrims feel like it's a place where nature reveals God's infinite power and presence.
- ✓ They hold daily services at the abbey, lead hikes and conduct workshops on Christian themes,
- ✓ Pilgrims help out with daily chores whilst they are there.