

## Christianity.

### What you need to know:

- ✓ How Christianity began.
  - ✓ Christianity today.
  - ✓ The life of Jesus.
  - ✓ The significance of the Bible.
  - ✓ The nature of God.
  - ✓ Beliefs about salvation and eternal life.
  - ✓ The importance of the resurrection.
  - ✓ Liturgical and non- liturgical worship.
  - ✓ The significance of Holy Communion (the Eucharist).
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### Jesus:

Jesus was born in Bethlehem and was the son of Mary. His earthly father was called Joseph. King Herod tried to kill him due the fact that the three Kings told Herod about their being a new King born. To ensure that Jesus stayed alive, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to Egypt. When Herod died they returned to Nazareth (their home town). Aged 30, Jesus was baptised by John (his cousin) in the River Jordan. He spent 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness being tested by the Devil before he began his ministry. When he did begin he chose 12 disciples and began reaching and performing **miracles**. Three years later he was crucified and rose from the dead three days after that.

The whole of Christianity is based on the life and teachings of Jesus. However, do not forget that Jesus was a Jew and that the reason for the Jews wanting him dead was due to his challenging their way of life and beliefs.

### God:

Christians believe in one God, making it a **monotheistic religion**, but in three parts:

Father: is the creator of the universe and He sustains life.

Son: Jesus, God's only son took human form and lived on earth.

Spirit: Guides believers through their daily life. (Remember the story of Pentecost and the posters that you did).

### Salvation and eternal life:

Remember: possessions can become an idol and can prevent people from obtaining eternal life.

#### *Luke 18:18 - 30 - the story of the rich young ruler.*

Jesus made it clear to the rich young ruler that to obtain eternal life he should sell all he had and give the money to the poor. Although Jesus does mention keeping the 10 Commandments he was highlighting to the man that he worshipped money more than God. One of Jesus' most famous sayings can be found in this passage: "It is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a Camel to go through the eye of a needle".

Remember: Jesus' mission was to save lost sinners.

#### *Luke 19:1 - 10 - the story of Zacchaeus.*

At Jericho, Jesus went to a Chief tax collector's house (Zacchaeus). The people around Jesus, including the disciples, grumbled about this as Zacchaeus was a sinner. But this visit from Jesus changed his life. Zacchaeus promised to give half of his possessions to the poor and that he would repay the money he had taken in overtaxing people by four times. On hearing this Jesus said "salvation has come into this house".

#### *Luke 24:1 - 12 - the story of the Resurrection.*

Early on the Sunday morning (what we know as Easter Sunday) some women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanne and Mary the mother of James, took herbs to anoint the body of Jesus. They had been unable to do this at the time of his burial as it was the beginning of the Sabbath. Jewish law states that no work is to be done on this holy day.

As the women entered the place where Jesus was buried they noticed that the stone to the entrance had been moved away and that Jesus' body was gone. Two men (angels) said that Jesus had risen from the dead. Terrified they returned to tell the Apostles. Peter ran to the tomb and found only the linen wrappings.

*Luke 24: 13 - 49 - the walk to Emmaus.*

A stranger joined Cleopas and his friend as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They did not recognise the stranger even though he explained the prophecies about how the Messiah would die. At Emmaus, as the stranger broke the bread, Cleopas and his friends realised that it was Jesus. They returned to Jerusalem and told Simon that Jesus had shown himself to them.

Jesus appeared, ate some fish and commanded that the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins be preached everywhere.

### The purpose and significance of the resurrection:

Christians believe that:

- As a perfect sacrifice, Jesus paid the price for sin to be forgiven.
- Only Jesus was good enough to be the atonement for sin.
- It is proof that Jesus is the Son of God and there is eternal life.
- Everyone needs to know the good news.
- It has inspired millions, even to endure persecution.

*1 Corinthians 15: 12 - 22.*

St. Paul wrote a letter to the Church in Corinth and explained that:

- Christianity is based on the resurrection.
- If it did not happen then Christians are to be pitied.
- If it is not possible for people to be raised to life then Jesus is dead.
- As Jesus did conquer death then believers will have eternal life.

### Worship:

Remember Christians worship in many different ways. Some prefer quiet and a time of reflection, others enjoy clapping, singing and dancing.

Some denominations have liturgical (a set form) of worship. A service book may be used (for example the Roman Catholics use the Missal) and the congregation read the written responses. Worship may be full of ritual (symbolic actions).

Some Christians prefer liturgical worship because:

- ✓ It becomes familiar.
- ✓ It is easy to follow.

- ✓ The ritual is enjoyed.
- ✓ The emphasis on the sacraments is enjoyed.
- ✓ They know what is going to happen next.

Non - liturgical worship has no set form. Prayers are made up on the spot - this is known as *extempore* prayer. A worship group may be lead the praise and worship.

Some Christians prefer non - liturgical worship because:

- ✓ It is unpredictable and interesting.
- ✓ Each service is different.
- ✓ It is less formal.
- ✓ People can express themselves more in their worship.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit guides worship.

### Holy Communion:

At the Last Supper before his crucifixion, Jesus asked his followers to eat bread and drink wine to remember his sacrifice.

Remember the bread represents Jesus' broken body and the wine his blood, which cleanses people from sin.

In most Christian denominations Holy Communion (the Eucharist) is the central act of worship. Roman Catholics believe that the bread and wine mysteriously changes into the body and blood of Jesus. The belief is called *transubstantiation*.

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

1. What does 'incarnation' mean?
2. How was Jesus put to death?
3. What do Christians receive at Holy Communion?
4. Why do some people prefer non - liturgical worship?