

Christianity

Jesus

- Lived in Israel.
- Crucified in around 29 AD.
- **Jesus** means “The Lord Saves” or “The Lord Heals”.
- **Christ** means “Anointed One” (kings, priests and prophets were anointed with oil).
- **Son of God** is a form of praise. “Son of” means to be like someone.
- **King** (God’s power), **Priest** (doing God’s will) and **Prophet** (speaking word of God).

Denominations

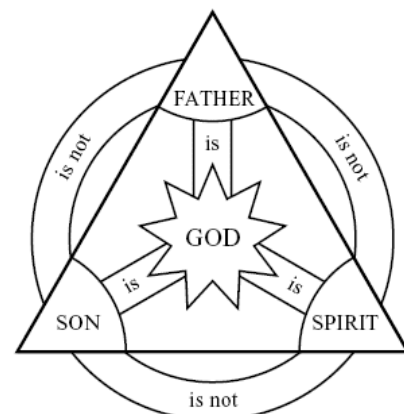
- 4th century AD – Christianity became official religion of Roman Empire.
- Different styles of worshipping developed.
- Major split in 1054. 2 Churches – **Eastern Orthodox** (Constantinople) and **Roman Catholic** (Rome).
- **Reformation** in 16th century – Protestant and Lutheran Churches set up, also Church of England.
- Other Christian denominations include Salvation Army, Baptists and Methodists. All worship same God, but in different ways.
- **Denominations** are like different football teams.
- **Ecumenical** means churches working together, joint services etc, to emphasise common beliefs.

Bible

- **The Bible** is a collection of books.
- **Old Testament** contains Jewish Scriptures. Written before Jesus. Also includes **prophets** and **writings**. 39 books. Written in Hebrew.
- **New Testament** includes the four **Gospels** (good news) telling the story of Jesus’ life, and teachings for the early Church. Written in Greek.
- Can be seen as a type of “guide book” for Christians. Has authority for Christians.

Beliefs

- Summarised in the Creed (see next page).
- One God (**monotheism**). 3 different persons of **Trinity** (Father, Son, Spirit) all make up the one God, all individually God too. Each person is God displayed in different ways. This diagram might help a little:



THE CREED:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,

Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell;

The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints;

The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the life everlasting. Amen.

Baptism

- Baby is joining the Christian Church. This also removes “original sin”, brought into the world by Adam and Eve.
- **Font** large water basin (often by door – evil spirits flying away) in which baby is baptised.
- **Water** is powerful, life-giving, has cleansing powers, is refreshing.
- Baby might also be anointed with oil called **Chrism** (symbol of Spirit – soothing and healing).
- **Godparents** make promises on behalf of baby.
- A **candle** might be lit. This gives heat, warmth, comfort and symbolises darkness to light.
- The baby will wear **white** to symbolise cleanliness, purity and lack of sin.
- **Prayers** are said on behalf of the baby.
- The baby is officially given a name.

Prayer

- Prayer is a conversation with God. Sometimes it is like leaving a message on his answering machine – maybe the reply won’t be immediate, won’t be what was expected, or might not seem to come at all.
- Private prayer is important as well as community prayer.
- Most famous prayer is **The Lord’s Prayer**.
- **Five types of Christian Prayer:**
 1. **Praise** is praising God for creating the world and everything in it.
 2. **Thanking** God for what he has done, and for individual achievements or gifts.
 3. **Asking forgiveness** for what has gone wrong.
 4. **Asking for yourself** to do well, succeed, have greater determination, etc.
 5. **Asking for others** such as family members, or for national issues such as world peace.

Places of Worship

- **Church** means assembly or gathering of people.
- Shortly after Jesus' death, Christians couldn't worship in public, as they were so unpopular with the Jews and risked being put to death.
- They often worshipped in secret in people's homes, or in catacombs.
- They had secret signs such as:



Icthus. This means 'fish' in Greek – Jesus said that he was a 'fisher of men'. The letters of 'ictus' also stand for 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour' in Greek.



Chi Rho are the first two letters of the word 'Christ' in Greek.

- A typical Church might contain:
 - **Font** for baptism.
 - **Altar** where communion services are held. On it there might be a cross and candles.
 - **Cross** or **Crucifix** reminding people about Jesus' crucifixion.
 - **Stalls** for the choir to sit in.
 - **Pews** for the congregation to sit in.
 - **Pulpit** for sermons.
 - **Lectern** (often in the shape of an eagle) for the Bible.

Holy Communion

- Based on the Last Supper, which is based on the Passover meal before the flight into Egypt.
- Involves bread and wine (Roman Catholics believe that this turns into the body and blood of Christ, other Christian denominations see it as a symbol of this).
- Might also be called **Mass** or **Eucharist**.

- It is a method by which Christians can pray together, worship God, and remember Jesus' life.
- Communion services often include:
 - Prayers
 - Hymns
 - Readings
 - Sermon

Ministers

- Might also be called **priests**, **vicars**, **chaplains** or **pastors**.
- They lead the **congregation** in worship. They wear **vestments**.
- Must be a man in the Orthodox or Roman Catholic churches.
- Roman Catholic priests are not allowed to marry.
- Ministers spend some years training, then they are **ordained** by a bishop.
- Their job will include leading services (communion, baptism, weddings, funerals), visiting members of the parish, visiting and praying with the sick, and providing leadership within the Church community.

Marriage

- Marriages often take place in a Church, but they do not have to any more.
- The couple make **vows** (promises) to love, comfort, honour, protect and be faithful to each other, whatever their lives may throw at them.

- **God** is present at a wedding ceremony, and joins the couple together spiritually.
- The man and woman exchange rings (rings are unending, like the couple's love for each other).

Easter

- The day that Jesus came back to life.
- **Ash Wednesday** at start of Lent (40 days). Ash is symbol for sorrow/sin.
- The final week of Lent is called **Holy Week**:

- **Palm Sunday** – Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, people threw palm leaves onto the road in front of him.
- **Monday to Wednesday** – Jesus taught in Jerusalem, whilst the Jewish leaders began to plot against him.
- **Maundy Thursday** – Last Supper. Praying in Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus arrested.
- **Good Friday** – Jesus sentenced to death and crucified.
- **Holy Saturday** – Jesus buried in a tomb made out of solid rock.
- **Easter Sunday** – Jesus rose from death, appeared to disciples.

Festivals

- **Christmas** celebrated on 25th December. This is the day that Jesus was born. Preceded by 24 days of **Advent** (coming).
- **Epiphany** 12 days after Christmas – commemorating the visit of the shepherds and wise men from the East.

- **Pentecost** is the event when the Holy Spirit came down (wind, tongues of fire). Also called Whitsun.
- **Harvest** is when people thank God for good crops. A harvest loaf and other gifts might be brought into the church, and subsequently distributed to the poor and needy.

Pilgrimage

- A journey to a special place of religious significance, sometimes where a saint is buried or where a vision has been seen.
- Sick people may go on pilgrimage in order to pray that they will get well again.

Places of pilgrimage include:

- **Bethlehem** where Jesus was born.
- **Jerusalem** where Jesus was crucified. This is a holy place for Christians, Jews and Muslims.
- **Rome** where the Pope (the head of the Roman Catholic Church) lives. It includes St Peter's Church, where St Peter is said to be buried.
- **Lourdes** (France) where there is a shrine to Mary, at the spot where a young peasant girl called Bernadette saw a vision of Mary in 1858. Spring of water there, too.
- **Canterbury** where St Thomas a Becket is buried, and where the Archbishop of Canterbury lives.

Judaism

Origins

- Abraham (Abram) – father of Judaism.
- Originally came from Ur.
- People worshipped many gods, including sun and moon (ziggurats).
- Abraham came to believe in God (came from **polytheistic** background).
- New home in Canaan.
- Called Hebrews (means ‘from the other side’ – Abraham travelled came from other side of Euphrates)
- Abraham was faithful and obedient to God, and was granted a son (Isaac) as a reward. He was loyal in almost sacrificing him, and was then promised many descendants (stars in sky, sand on sea shore). Jews still believe that they have this **covenant** with God.
- Abraham + Sarah → Isaac (marries Rebecca) → Esau + Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons (one of whom was Joseph) and they moved to Egypt.
- Later, Hebrews became slaves, 10 plagues, led away into desert by Moses. 40 years. Eventually back to Canaan, 12 tribes (each named after one of Abraham’s great grandsons). ‘Jew’ comes from tribe of Judah.

Holy Books

- **Tenach** – Jewish scriptures. A collection of 24 books in Hebrew (we would think of it as the Old Testament). This is split into:
 - **Torah** – “teaching”. First five books. Contains a mixture of teaching and commandments (613 of them). 10 Commandments part of this. Guide to life. Central and most important document of Judaism.
 - **Prophets** – for example Elijah, Samuel, Isaiah.
 - **Writings** – praise, poems, prayers and saying about God. Includes the *Psalms*.
- The **Talmud** (‘study’) is another holy book. Advice from early Jewish leaders who studied the Torah – rules to help Jews follow the commandments.

Beliefs

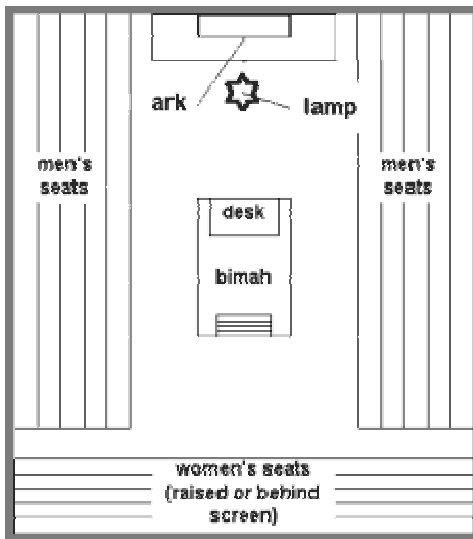
- **Monotheistic** – one God.
- **Shema** – this is a prayer in Hebrew (part of the Torah). It declares faith in one God, and a commitment to the Jewish faith. First prayer a Jewish child learns, and the last thing Jews should say before death.
- **Messiah** – God’s messenger of peace. Jews are still waiting for a Messiah, who will bring everyone together. Maybe this will be a spiritual force rather than a special man.
- **The World to Come: Olam Ha’ba** – Jews believe in an afterlife. Death is not the end, and this is a motivation to lead a good life.

Synagogue

- Means ‘assembly’ or ‘gathering’. A place where Jews can meet, pray, study and talk.
- **Sabbath** starts at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday
- Orthodox men attend on Friday evening then return home for the meal.

- Reform synagogues usually have later services so everyone can attend after they have eaten.
- Saturday morning services are for everybody.
- **Siddur** – Jewish prayer book. Any member of the congregation can lead the services (doesn't have to be a **Rabbi**) but in an Orthodox Synagogue it is always a man.
- In an Orthodox synagogue, nearly all the service is in Hebrew.
- Jewish men should pray three times each day. They:
 - Praise God for his creation.
 - Ask him to care for those in trouble.
 - Thank him for looking after everyone
 - Ask for his forgiveness
 - Pray for world peace

Plan of an Orthodox Synagogue:



- The Torah scrolls are kept in the ark. The central part of the service is hearing these read aloud.
- A light (called Ner Tamid) may hang above the Ark. This reminds Jews of God's presence, and also the fire that guided them when they were exiles in the desert.
- The Bimah is the platform from which the Torah is read.
- A synagogue may also contain a **Menorah**. This is a seven branched candlestick (creation in seven days). This reminds Jews of God and of creation.

Orthodox & Reform

- **Orthodox** – more traditional. Concerned with keeping as closely to the original rules and commandments as possible – as given by God. Men and women sit apart in Synagogue (as it was in Temple times). Different rules for men (more regarding the community) and women (more regarding the home)
- **Reform** – more modern, equality of women, more embracing of modern culture.

Family Life

- **Mezuzah** – a tiny scroll (first part of the Shema is written on it) contained in a small box attached to right hand door post. Shows visitors that they are entering a Jewish home. Reminds the family that God is with them, so they must obey his rules.

Some Jews touch the Mezuzah as they enter and leave the house – sign of respect for God's word.

- Jewish families try to educate their children to follow the ways of Judaism.
- Father:
 - Support the family
 - Study the Torah
 - See that his children study the Torah

- **Mother:** Feed the family as the Torah instructs
Make sure that husband and sons have the right clothes
Prepare the home for the Sabbath and festivals.
Teach the daughters, preparing them for running their own homes
- **Food** **Kosher** – been prepared according to food laws (means ‘fit to eat’).
Torah states clearly what can and cannot be eaten, how to kill animals, etc. Dishes with meat cannot be eaten at the same time as ones containing milk.
Orthodox Jews will use separate pots and pans for each.
- **Clothes** Worn when praying:
Kippa (skull cap). Reminds Jews that they must follow God’s laws at all times. Sign of respect for God. Orthodox Jewish men will wear this all the time.
Tallit (prayer shawl). The fringes around the edge remind Jews of the commandments in the Torah.
Tefillin (box containing words from the Shema). Tied to forehead and left arm during prayer. Keep God’s law with all heart and concentrate on it with all mind.

Shabbat

- House must be clean and tidy, table laid, wine ready in advance.
- Sabbath candles are lit as Sabbath begins. Blessing is said.
- ‘Shabbat shalom’ – happy Sabbath
- **Kiddush** – blessing over the wine.
- **Challot** (Sabbath loaves) – blessed and distributed by father, who also recites verses from the Tenach
- The meal ends with wine and blessings. Then candle is lit and spice box brought out, in the hope that its sweetness will last for the next week.

Bar Mitzvah

- Bar Mitzvah (13 – boy). Bat Mitzvah (12 – girl).
- “Son (or daughter) of the Commandments”
- New responsibilities to observe commandments and religion – now treated as adults.
- Great celebration – relatives may travel from all over world.
- Boys read from Torah for first time (girls do, too, in Reform Synagogues).
- Boys will wear the Tefillin for the first time.

Marriage to Death

- Jews encouraged to marry other Jews (especially Orthodox).
- **Huppah** canopy with four poles (symbolises the couple’s future home). Bride and groom stand underneath.
- Rabbi talks about their marriage, blesses them, then they drink from the same goblet (sharing a life together)
- Groom places a ring on the bride’s finger.
- **Ketubah** – marriage agreement read by the Rabbi.

- Seven blessings
- Groom crushes wine glass under heel (Temple was destroyed – bad and good times lie ahead).
- **Mazel Tov** – good luck

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

- After death, Jews believe that everyone is equal.
- Plain coffin, no flowers. Orthodox Jews always buried not cremated.
- After burial, family spend week at home talking about their feelings. Friends bring them food. Men don't shave, women don't wear makeup. May sit on low stools and wear slippers – normal life interrupted.
- **Kaddish** – prayer said every year by children on anniversary of the death. Praises God and asks for peace. Candle also lit.

Rabbis

- Means “teacher”. Helps congregation to understand Jewish way of life.
- Teaching/setting example/hospital visits/in charge of services/Jewish ambassador to others/praying

Festivals

- **Pesach** – Spring Festival. Remembering the Exodus. **Hagadah** book tells the story, and also has hymns and songs. Story of the Exodus read aloud. Sadness and joy – Jews were once slaves, but now free. A meal is eaten from the **Seder** table, to commemorate the Passover meal
- **Shavuot** – in the Summer (50 days after Pesach), giving thanks for the Torah. Commemorates time when Moses went up Mt Sinai and spoke with God. Jews set free from slavery to serve God. They have responsibilities.
- **Sukkot** – the name of the temporary shelters built by Jews in the desert. Remembering that God looked after Jews in the desert. A sukkot might now be built in gardens, or in the Synagogue. Jews carry palm, myrtle, willow and wave them up/down/north/south/east/west – God is everywhere.
- **Simchat Torah** – at end of Sukkot. “Rejoicing of the law”. Scrolls carried round Synagogue seven times
- **Hanukkah** (festival of light). Hope, and presence of God. Roughly same time as Christmas. Presents. Commemorates when Jews drove Greeks out of Jerusalem 2,000 years ago and could worship again. Lamp in Temple re-lit, one day's oil left, but it burned for eight days. Now, special candlestick – 8 candles + 1 for lighting the rest. One, then two, then three etc. lit over the eight days of celebration.
- **Rosh Hashanah** – “New Year” (in September/October) – remembering creation of the world. Meal. Chance to show sorrow and apologise to each other (and God) for sins and be in God's “Book of Life”. 10 days to do this. Ends with **Yom Kippur** (day of Atonement). Eat night before, then fast on the day. Both “High Holydays” – most important festivals in Jewish year.
- **Purim** – February or March. Remembering Esther (Queen of Persia), who saved the Jews when Haman wanted to kill them. The full story is read, and children boo, hiss and shake rattles when Haman's name is mentioned.