Religious Studies - Year 8 - Term 1 - What does it mean to be a Christian today?

Year 8 Term 1

Keywords:

The Trinity	The belief in one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Jesus	The Son of God, central figure of Christianity.
Bible	The sacred Christian text, divided into Old and New Testaments.
Baptism	A ceremony welcoming someone into the Christian faith.
Eucharist	A ceremony remembering Jesus' sacrifice using bread and wine.
Pope	The leader of the Roman Catholic Church.
Resurrection	Jesus rising from the dead after crucifixion.
Parables	Stories told by Jesus to teach moral lessons.
Salvation	The belief that Jesus' death and resurrection save humanity from sin.
Nicene Creed	A Christian statement of faith about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
The Lords Prayer	A central Christian prayer taught by Jesus, reflecting key beliefs about God and serving as a model for prayer.
Liberal Christians	Christians who view the Bible as written about God by humans, interpreting stories to fit modern life.
Literalist Christian	Christians who believe every word of the Bible is exactly true and the direct voice of God.

Sacred Writing:

"Love your neighbour as yourself."
Christians should love and care for others.

"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."
To forgive is important to receive forgiveness.

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged."
Avoid judging others to not be judged yourself and grow in faith.

"God created mankind in his own image."
Humans are special showing their value.

"...Overcome evil with good."
Respond to evil with good actions.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."
Peacemakers are blessed and seen as God's children.

Trinity TV
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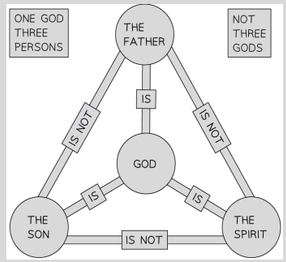
The Trinity

The Trinity is the Christian belief that there is *one God* who exists in *three persons*:
- God the Father – the creator of the world
- God the Son – Jesus Christ, who lived as a human and saved people from sin
- God the Holy Spirit – God's presence and power in the world today

Even though they are three distinct persons, Christians believe they are all fully God and work together as one. In worship, Christians often show this belief by:
- Praying "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"
- Baptising using the Trinitarian formula (like "I baptise you in the name of...")
- Singing hymns that praise all three parts of the Trinity
- Celebrating festivals like Christmas (focused on Jesus, the Son) and Pentecost (focused on the Holy Spirit)

The Sign of the Cross: Used especially in Catholic and Orthodox traditions, where people touch their head, chest, and shoulders while saying "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Creeds: Statements of belief like the Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed mention each person of the Trinity and are recited during services.



Who was Jesus?

- Jesus is the central figure of Christianity and is believed by Christians to be the Son of God.
- He was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, working as a carpenter before becoming a teacher.
- Jesus travelled, teaching crowds about God's love, forgiveness, and the Kingdom of God.
- He taught using parables, which are short stories with deep spiritual meanings (like the Good Samaritan or the Lost Sheep).
- Jesus performed many miracles, such as healing people, feeding the hungry, and calming storms.
- He was crucified on a cross, an event Christians remember on Good Friday, and they believe he rose from the dead on Easter Sunday.

Jesus' Influence:
His teachings encouraged people to love their neighbour, forgive, and help those in need.
Christians view him as the perfect role model, and they try to live like him, kind, generous, peaceful, and forgiving. His message of hope, justice, and peace continues to inspire millions around the world today.
His story is found mainly in the New Testament of the Bible, especially in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).

The Bible:

The Bible is not just one book, it's a **library** of **66 different books**, written by many different people over hundreds of years.
Two Main Parts:
The Old Testament (39 books) - Written before Jesus was born.
Tells the story of creation, early humanity, and God's relationship with the people of Israel.
Includes famous stories like Noah's Ark, Moses and the Exodus, and the Ten Commandments.
The New Testament (27 books) - Written after Jesus lived.
Focuses on Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection. Includes the Gospels, letters from early Christian leaders (like Paul), and the book of Revelation.
Why Is the Bible Important to Christians?
It is believed to be the **Word of God**, offering **truth**, **wisdom**, and **guidance**.
It helps Christians understand **God's character**, **promises**, and **expectations**.
It shows them how to **live a good life** and grow in **faith**.
How Is the Bible Used?
In **public worship**: Readings during church services, sermons, and hymns based on biblical themes.
In **private prayer**: People read it for comfort, strength, and direction.
During **major life events**: Verses are read at baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
Some Christians **memorise important verses** or read it daily using devotionals.

Churches and Denominations:

Christians belong to different denominations, or branches of the faith, each with its own worship styles, traditions, and church designs.

Catholic Churches: Richly decorated with statues, stained glass, and Stations of the Cross. Include a font for baptisms, a confessional, and display a crucifix to focus on Jesus' suffering.

Anglican Churches: Similar layout to Catholics but simpler. Some display a plain cross and may have traditional hymns and Bible readings. Can vary from traditional (High Church) to modern (Low Church).

Evangelical & Pentecostal Churches: Often use modern, flexible spaces. Worship is lively with music, clapping, and preaching. Focus on personal faith and the Bible, with fewer religious symbols.

Orthodox Churches: Highly decorated with icons, candles, and gold designs. Worship involves chanting, incense, and standing. A special screen called an iconostasis separates the altar.

The Roles in a Church

Priest / Minister: The person in charge of leading worship services. They deliver sermons (talks about faith and life), celebrate Communion, and offer spiritual support to people in the church.
Choir Members / Musicians: Use music and singing to help people feel closer to God. They often perform hymns during services and may lead the congregation in worship songs.
Readers (Lectors): Read out Bible passages during the service. This helps share God's word with everyone in the church.
Altar Servers: Usually younger members who assist the priest during services by carrying candles, preparing the altar, and helping with Communion.
Deacons: Serve in both practical and spiritual roles—they support the priest, preach, lead prayers, and often help organise charity work or church events.
Pope (in the Roman Catholic Church): The head of the Catholic Church worldwide, based in Vatican City. Catholics believe he is the successor of Saint Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers. He gives teachings to guide Catholics in their faith.
Bishops: Oversee a group of churches in an area called a diocese. They support priests, perform confirmations, and help lead the wider church.
Lay People / Congregation: Ordinary members of the church who take part in worship, prayer, and service. They may also volunteer, join church groups, or help in community work.