



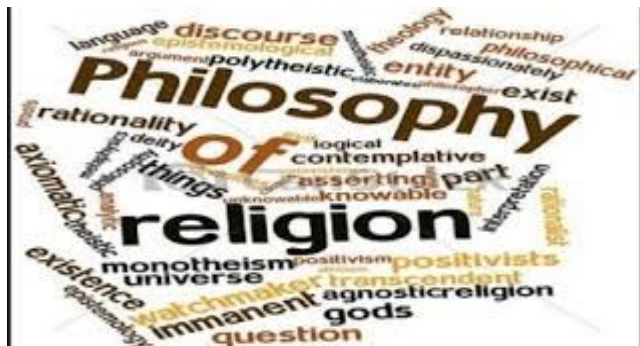
# CHURCHDOWN SCHOOL ACADEMY

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

### GCSE TRANSITION DOCUMENT



#### BELIEFS AND PRACTICES



#### THEMES

## **INTRODUCTION**

At Churchdown School Academy we use the AQA Examination Board for GCSE Religious Studies (A). This particular syllabus requires us to study the beliefs and practices of two religions (we have opted for Christianity and Buddhism) and to investigate four themes ( we have opted for Religion and Relationships, Religion and Life, Religion Peace and Conflict and Religion, Crime and Punishment).

The following information and set of tasks is designed to help you make the transition from KS3 to KS4. Much of the information builds on what you have looked at in KS3 and starts with the key beliefs of both religions. These key beliefs should be committed to memory as they create the foundation to both the religion and ethics side of the course.

For further help on any of the information and tasks in this booklet contact:

cae@churchdownschool.com (Mrs. Elliot-Smith)

klj@churchdownschool.com (Miss Jenkins)

### **Further reading (and watching)**

Studying for GCSE RS doesn't stop at the textbook. You can be thinking about RS whilst watching the news, films, documentaries and TV series. Here are few examples for you.

### **Books**

My sister's keeper—Jodi Picoult (Ethics)

Sophie's World—Jostein Gaarder (Philosophy)

The God Delusion—Richard Dawkins (Philosophy)

The Dawkins Delusion—Alistair McGrath (Philosophy)

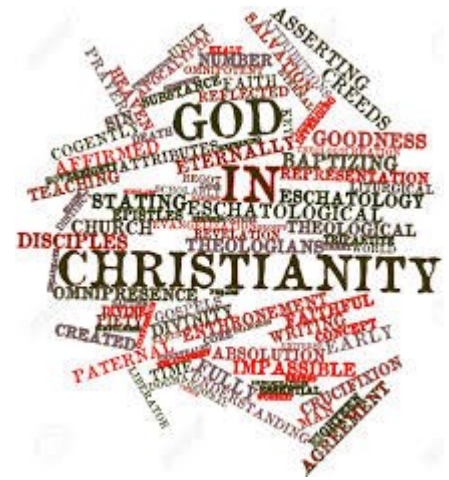
### **Films**

Bruce Almighty (Philosophy)

What dreams may come (Religious beliefs)

The Truman Show (Ethics)

The Matrix (Philosophy)



λόγος

## KEY BELIEFS CHRISTIANITY



### LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR

**(Matthew 22: 37—39)**

This is a key teaching from Jesus. It is telling people that they should always act in the best interests of others. Many Christians interpret to mean that if you make a decision to act based on the motive of love then that action will be a good action. Essentially it means always do the most loving thing.



### THE SANCTITY OF LIFE PRINCIPLE (SOLP)

A principle is a rule followed by Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This rule says that all life is valuable because it is created by God. As all life is valuable regardless of condition or what someone has done every human should be treated with respect. Only God decides when life begins and life ends. Human life should therefore be preserved at all costs. Sanctity means 'holiness'.



### THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

**(Luke 10:25—37)**

This story told by Jesus tells people that we should not treat people differently because of our differences. It doesn't matter what we believe, our ethnic background, the colour of our skin, our political beliefs etc. if a person is in need of our help we should stop and give it. Nothing is more important, not even religion.



### THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND GOATS

**(Matthew 25: 31—46)**

This story told by Jesus contains the entry requirements for heaven. Essentially it teaches Christians that helping people is not an option but an obligation. By ignoring someone in need of help or unable to help themselves you are turning your back on God.

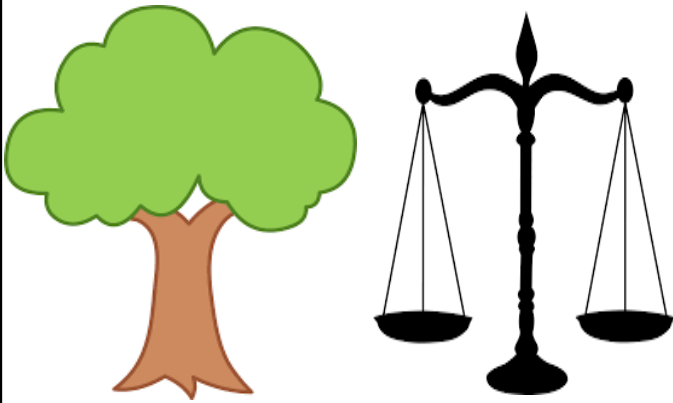
## KEY BELIEFS CHRISTIANITY



### ALL MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

(Genesis 1:26)

This teaching comes from the creation story at the beginning of the Bible. It tells Christians that our characteristics are lesser versions of God's characteristics. Differences in characteristics are God given and are there because God has chosen them to be this way. We are different but all equal because we are created by God. God has no favourites and neither should we.



### NATURAL MORAL LAW

This is a teaching of the Roman Catholic Christian Church only. Any action which follows the pattern of how nature (or God) intended is morally right. For example Man + Woman = Baby.

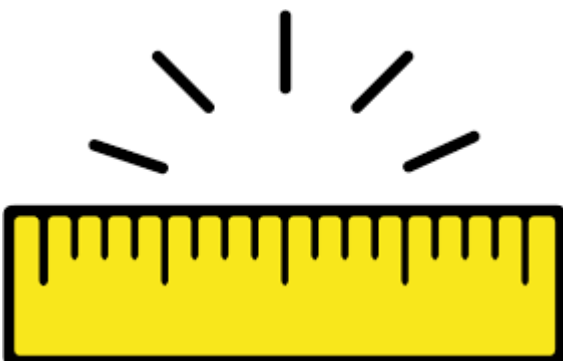
Due to this belief the Roman Catholic Church does not approve of artificial contraception because it prevents this from happening.



### THOU SHALT NOT KILL

(Exodus 20:13)

This is the sixth of the Ten Commandments. It only applies to human life. It is very clear about what it means and there are no exceptions.



### THE GOLDEN RULE

(Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 7:12)

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Very simply don't treat people in a way that you would not want to be treated. This does not just apply to actions but also to making judgements about other people and what they do.



## TASK ONE



It is important that you learn these key beliefs now. They are important to each section of the course and will help you understand new topics as well as save you a lot of revision work later on. The easiest way to do them is to make them into flash cards and that way you can test yourself or get others to test you. The pictures are really important to help you learn the key detail so make sure they are on one side of the card.

## TASK TWO

The key beliefs can be used to help you work out what a Christian would think about different situations we face in life. Below are a number of situations. Use the key beliefs to say what a Christian might do. The first one is done for you as an example. This example has two Christian responses but not all of them will.

<b>Abortion</b>	Some Christians would say that abortion is always wrong because the <b>Sanctity of Life Principle</b> says that only God decides when life ends not humans. They might also say it is wrong because abortion is ending a human life and this goes against the commandment ' <b>Thou shalt not kill</b> '. Other Christians would say that abortion could happen if it was the <b>most loving thing to do</b> .
<b>Acts of racism</b>	
<b>Terrorism</b>	
<b>Capital Punishment (Death Penalty)</b>	
<b>Giving to charity</b>	

<b>Using nuclear weapons</b>	
<b>Helping victims of war</b>	
<b>Use of contraception</b>	
<b>Homosexuality</b>	
<b>Assisted Suicide</b>	
<b>Breaking the law</b>	

## GOD—WHAT IS IT?

## Describing God.

People with religious beliefs describe God in many different ways. This is probably because they are trying to describe something that they can't see and suggests that God means different things to different people.

God is a concept not a human, and to religious believers God is something far greater than a human being. Over the centuries people have devised words which can only be properly used when describing God.

Characteristic	Meaning
Immanence	God is in the world
Just	The ultimate source of justice
Omnipotent	All powerful
Omniscient	All knowing
Omnibenevolent	All loving
Transcendent /Omnipresent	Not limited by time or space

## TASK ONE

Using the link below find out the in depth meanings of the words above.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zrpgmsg/revision/1>

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



Christians also refer to God as a judge who is interested in how people behave. They believe that when they die they will be brought to account for their actions and judged good or bad. This judgement determines the path of their afterlife. A good judgement will mean eternity in heaven, a bad judgement will mean hell. Some Christians, however believe that God is forgiving, and that everyone who is truly sorry for their bad actions will be allowed into heaven.



Hopefully everything is quite straight forward. Make sure you know what these key descriptions of are and means. There are problems with these descriptions but we will address these later



### THE TRINITY

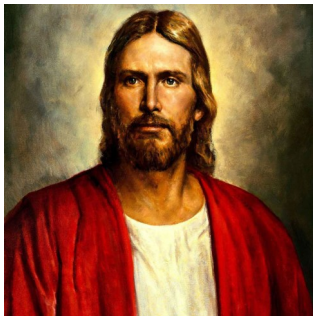
The descriptions above of God are all descriptions shared by Christians, Muslims and Jews. This is not surprising because they all believe in the same one God, they just worship and understand God in different ways. Christians also have an additional way of looking at God. This is known as the Trinity. Just as you react to different people in different ways, Christians believe that different people see God in different ways and to them he has different characteristics. The most talked about characteristics or personalities of God are known as:

KNOWN AS	CHARACTERISTICS / JOB DESCRIPTION
God the Father	Calling God 'Father' is a way of showing belief that God created everything. It is also a way of showing a close and loving relationship, where the father cares for his children and they can rely on him. Some people become Christians by looking around at God's creation and being amazed and inspired by what they see.
God the Son	Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. They believe that God chose to come to earth as a man, to teach people the right way to live, and to sacrifice himself so that people could be forgiven for doing wrong. Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead to show that there was life after death. Some people become Christians through reading and understanding the teachings of Jesus in the Bible.
God the Holy Spirit	Christians believe that after Jesus rose from the dead and went back into heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to live on in the world in the lives of Christians, giving them courage, comforting them, inspiring them and guiding them in their decisions. Some people become Christians because they experience the power of God through the Holy Spirit.

## TASK TWO

Use the reference below to make some concise notes on each part of the Trinity.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zrpqmsg/revision/2>

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# JESUS



You have probably already realised that the big character in all of this is Jesus. In fact if it wasn't for Jesus there would be no Christianity at all. It is important therefore that we know some key information about this person. Jesus did exist as a historical figure and was crucified by the Romans. However, Christians have specific beliefs about who Jesus was , what he did and why he did it. Until about the Third Century AD there was no such teaching as the Trinity. People had not yet concluded that Jesus was actually God in human form (as modern day Christians believe). This is why we get confusing titles about Jesus being The Son of God. By the Third Century AD there is a definite shift in thinking and Jesus is considered to be God in human form (**incarnate** ) . As God in human form, Jesus is not only here to teach people how to live but also to restore the relationship between God and his creation (humanity) This is known as **atonement**. The diagram on the other page helps to explain this

God and humans have an agreement

I'll look after you if you worship me

**NOTE**

God is Jesus in human form. As Jesus, God experiences all it is to be human including temptation, pain and emotional suffering. This is known as the INCARNATION. God in human form can communicate directly with humans in a way that they can understand. Jesus taught people a new way of living with an emphasis on love and forgiveness

God keeps his side of the bargain

Humans sin (act against God)

Make sacrifices to say sorry to God.

God comes down in human form to restore the relationship between Him and humanity

As Jesus he teaches people how to put things right with God

Jesus dies in the cross to restore the relationship between God and humans

Jesus rises from the dead. (RESURRECTION)  
This shows that the relationship with God is restored and there is an afterlife for all who believe.

Jesus instructs disciples how to carry on the job without him then ascends to heaven

Holy Spirit comes to help.

Disciples(students) become known as the apostles (teachers) after Jesus returns to heaven. THE ASCENSION

To help the apostles go out into the world and teach about the new religion, Holy Spirit visits them

This event is known as PENTECOST (the birthday of the Christian Church)

In the description of the event, the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a mighty wind and flames of fire

The Holy Spirit gives each of us the ability to communicate with all people of all nationalities. These are known as the gifts of The Spirit

Baptism by the Holy Spirit.

Some Christians believe that when they are baptised the Spirit lives within them and helps them live according to the teachings of Jesus

Other Christians believe that the Holy Spirit empowers them to carry out the same role as the apostles

All Christians believe that the Holy Spirit gives people the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Christians can be recognised by these gifts through their actions.

The bible also says that the Holy Spirit gives people particular talents to help them spread the word of God e.g. healing or teaching

### TASK THREE

Find the meanings of the following words related to the story of Jesus.

You will find this information on the AQA website. Use the reference below and scroll down to **Christianity**.

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a/teach/subject-specific-vocabulary-component-1-the-study-of-religions-beliefs-teachings-and-practices>

WORD O PHRASE	DEFINITION
Ascension	
Atonement	
Christ	
Christmas	
Crucifixion	
Easter	
Holy Spirit	
Incarnation	
Jesus	
Resurrection	
Salvation	
Sin	
Son of God	
The Father	
Trinity	

## FESTIVALS

Given the importance of Jesus within Christianity, it is not surprising that the two main festivals of the religion focus around his birth and his death. Below is an explanation of the reason for each festival and how each festival is celebrated.

### CHRISTMAS

#### Why is Christmas celebrated?

Christmas is when Christians celebrate the **Incarnation or birth of Jesus**, when God came to earth in human form. In Western Christianity this is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup> every year. The celebrations continue for 12 days ending with the feast of the **Epiphany** on January 6<sup>th</sup>. However, in Eastern or Orthodox Christianity Christmas is celebrated on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### How is Christmas celebrated by Christians?

For Christians, although all this is still part of their celebrations, it is also a time of simplicity, family and friendship with the Church at the centre of celebration and remembrance. For most Christians, attending Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve is an important celebration. The Eucharist begins in near darkness, with only candles for light. When the Gospel readings begin, the lights come on, symbolic of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World. Carols are sung, churches are beautifully decorated with flowers and sometimes Christmas trees. There is often a Nativity crib scene which will be blessed, although the Wise Men will not be added until January 6<sup>th</sup>.

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### Why is Christmas important to Christians?

Christmas is important because:

Christians thank God for, and celebrate with joy, the incarnation of God in human form – Jesus Christ

It is a time for both giving and receiving from loved ones, so is a symbol of love shared.

It is a time to remember those who, like Jesus and his family, live in difficult circumstances.

Christians should give generously to charities that support those in need.

It highlights Christmas and its meaning for non- Christians.

## EASTER

### Why is Easter celebrated and why is it so important?

Easter is the most important festival for Christians. It celebrates the time when Jesus rose from the dead after he was put to death by the Romans. Without Jesus' death and **resurrection** Christianity wouldn't exist. These actions meant that the relationship between humanity and God had been restored (**atonement**), that humans had been **forgiven** for all their sins against God and that their would be **life after death** in heaven.

### How is Easter celebrated?

Easter is a happy time. It is a festival of hope and light. It celebrates new life. In churches Easter is celebrated with special services such as the Easter Vigil and the First Mass of Easter. Many go to church to thank God for Jesus' life. Church bells are rung and there will often be lots of flowers to make the church colourful and bright. There will be joyful hymns and choruses sung. Some churches will hold a service early in the morning, just as day breaks, to remember how Mary went to the tomb at daybreak and discovered the empty tomb and Jesus alive.

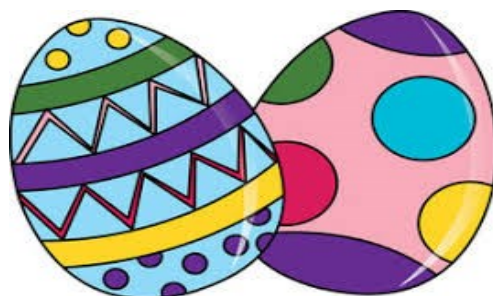


## TASK

At the end of this booklet you will be asked to complete an extended piece of writing about the festivals of Christmas and Easter. To help you achieve this in the space on the next page summarise what you consider to be the important points about Christmas and Easter. Bare in mind that in the GCSE they will always ask you to explain what happens and why something happens. Look for for the what and why in the notes above.

**CHRISTMAS**

**EASTER**

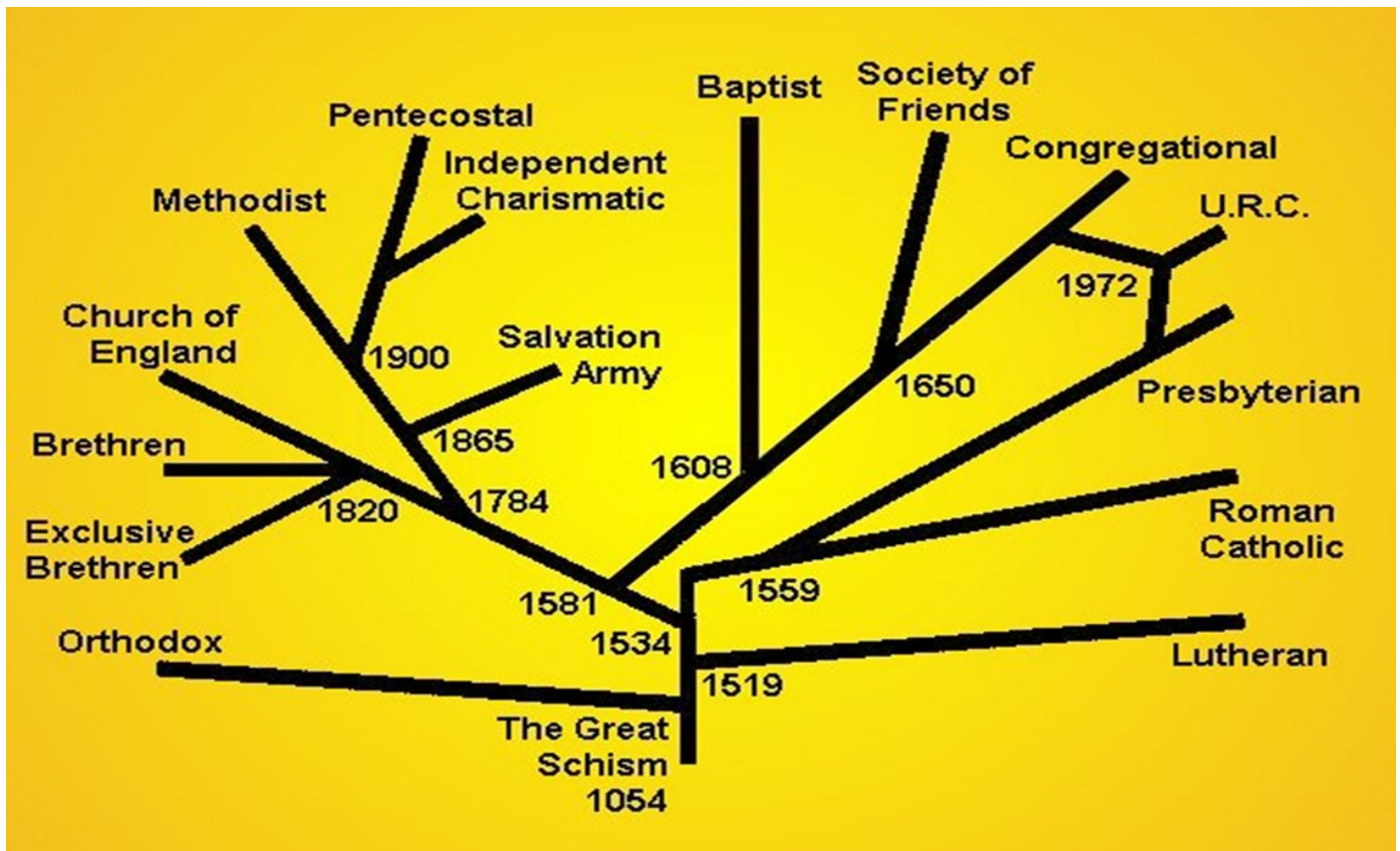




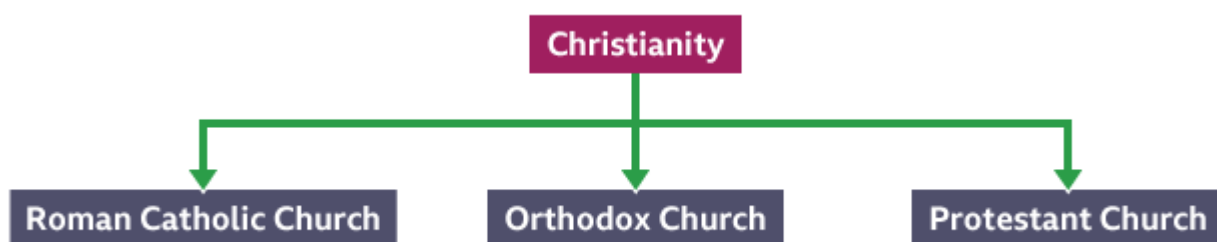
## DIFFERENT FORMS OF CHRISTIANITY

### Denomination

A denomination is a type of Christianity. In the last census there were 200 different denominations or types of Christianity in the UK alone. In this GCSE we will be studying the largest denominations. The diagram below shows just some of these groups and when they came into existence.



Essentially, all these denominations believe that Jesus is God, and that the Bible is the authority for all Christians. (We shall look at this later). However, they interpret the Bible differently and have different ways of worshipping God. Historically, there have been several key events when divisions were created within Christianity. Examples include the Great Schism of AD 1054 and the Reformation in the 16th century.



### TASK ONE

We will be looking at the three main groups in the diagram above. Using the following reference research the three groups and record your findings in the space on the next page.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zbj48mn/revision/8>



## RESEARCH NOTES

### Roman Catholic Tradition

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### Protestant Tradition

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### Orthodox Tradition

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Pope Francis Leader of the Roman Catholic Church



Justin Welby—Archbishop of Canterbury. Leader of the Anglican Church (A Protestant Church)



Patriarch Kirill—Leader of the Russian Orthodox Church

## AUTHORITY

For Christians today they will look to two sources of authority when they need guidance—The Church and The Bible. From both Christians believe they will be able to find what of God wants them to do. The Bible is a set books put together over hundreds of years. It gets its name from the word *biblios* which is the Greek for books. Essentially it is a library or collection of books; there is no one author with many Christians believing that God inspired the authors of the various books to write what they did. The Bible is divided into two sections—the Old and the New Testament. Testament means agreement. Both sections relate to the agreements made between God and his people. The Old Testament is made up of the scriptures which are important to the Jewish religion and are collectively known as the Torah. This section is in the Christian holy book because Christianity developed from the religion of Judaism; Jesus was born a Jew and died a Jew. The New Testament contains the biography of Jesus, the history of the early Christian Church, letters to the new Christian churches and prophecy. There are different versions of the Bible because the Bible over time have been translated from and to many different languages.

### TASK

Your job is to find the answer to the following questions.

1. How many books are in the Old Testament?
2. How many books in the New Testament?
3. What is a Gospel?
4. What does the word Gospel mean?
5. Who are the authors of the Gospels?
6. Which five books of the Old Testament are also known as the Pentateuch?
7. Which book contains the story of creation?
8. Who was St. Paul and which books of the Bible are linked to him?
9. Which language/s was the Old Testament originally written in?
10. Which language/s was the New Testament originally written in?
11. Which scholars originally translated the Old and New Testament into English?
12. What happened to these scholars and why?
13. What was the impact of translating the Bible into English?

### TASK TWO

Create a mindmap of the Bible. Divide it into two sections—the Old Testament and New Testament and into the following book types— history, law, the prophets, poetry, biography (gospels) and letters. Use the picture of the next page to help you.

# BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

## OLD TESTAMENT - 39 Books

### LAW - 5

GENESIS
EXODUS
LEVITICUS
NUMBERS
DEUTERONOMY

### POETRY - 5

JOB
PSALMS
PROVERBS
ECCLESIASTES
SONG OF SOLOMON

### MAJOR PROPHETS - 5

ISAIAH
JEREMIAH
LAMENTATIONS
EZEKIEL
DANIEL

### HISTORY - 12

JOSHUA
JUDGES
RUTH
1 SAMUEL
2 SAMUEL
1 KINGS
2 KINGS
1 CHRONICLES
2 CHRONICLES
EZRA
NEHEMIAH
ESTHER

### MINOR PROPHETS - 12

HOSEA
JOEL
AMOS
OBADIAH
JONAH
MICAH
NAHUM
HABAKKUK
ZEPHANIAH
HAGGAI
ZECHARIAH
MALACHI

## NEW TESTAMENT - 27 Books

### GOSPELS - 4

MATTHEW
MARK
LUKE
JOHN

### PAUL'S LETTERS TO FRIENDS - 4

1 TIMOTHY
2 TIMOTHY
TITUS
PHILEMON

### HISTORY - 1

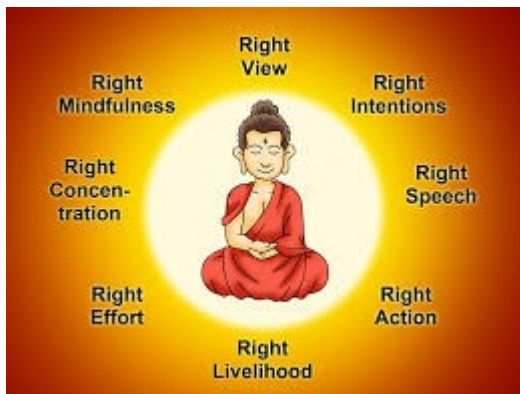
ACTS
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### PAUL'S LETTERS TO CHURCHES - 9

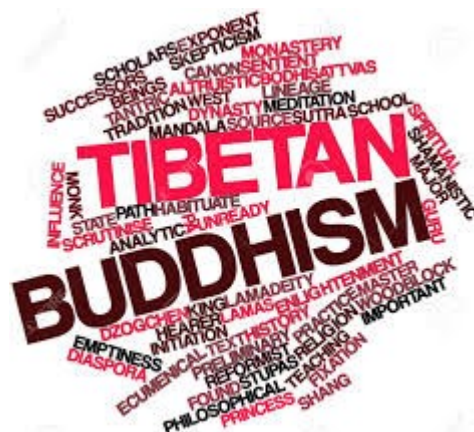
ROMANS
1 CORINTHIANS
2 CORINTHIANS
GALATIANS
EPHESIANS
PHILIPPIANS
COLOSSIANS
1 THESSALONIANS
2 THESSALONIANS

### GENERAL LETTERS - 9


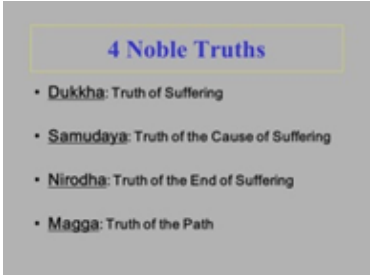


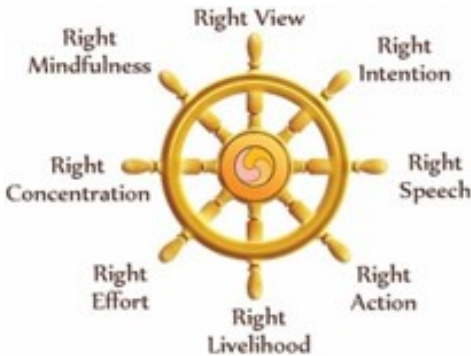
HEBREWS
JAMES
1 PETER
2 PETER
1 JOHN
2 JOHN
3 JOHN
JUDE
REVELATION



# BUDDHISM




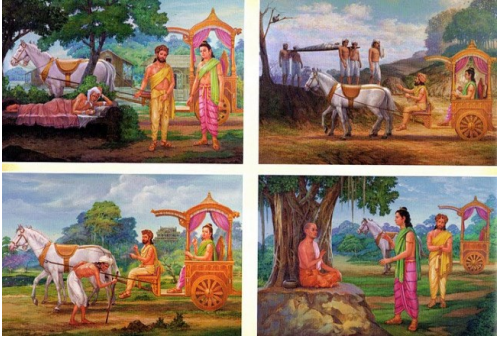
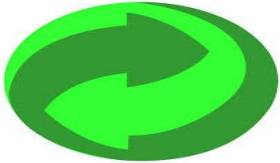



## KEY BELIEFS BUDDHISM

	<p><b>Dukkha</b></p> <p>The First Noble Truth and idea that all life involves suffering</p>											
	<p><b>The Four Noble Truths</b></p> <p>They are the <b>truth</b> of suffering, the <b>truth</b> of the cause of suffering, the <b>truth</b> of the end of suffering, and the <b>truth</b> of the path that leads to the end of suffering. More simply put, suffering exists; it has a cause; it has</p>											
	<p><b>The Three Poisons</b></p> <p>The three things that keep a person in the cycle of Samsara,. These are greed, ignorance and hatred.</p>											
	<p><b>Nibanna</b></p> <p>The Buddhist goal to escape from the cycle of samara and it translates as 'extinction of the flame'</p>											
	<p><b>The Eightfold Path</b></p> <p>The eight steps a Buddhist must follow to achieve enlightenment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right view</li> <li>• Right intention</li> <li>• Right speech</li> <li>• Right action</li> <li>• Right livelihood</li> <li>• Right effort</li> <li>• Right concentration</li> </ul>											
<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Wisdom</td><td>Right Understanding</td></tr> <tr> <td>Right Aspiration</td></tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Morality</td><td>Right Speech</td></tr> <tr> <td>Right Action</td></tr> <tr> <td>Right Livelihood</td></tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Concentration</td><td>Right Effort</td></tr> <tr> <td>Right Mindfulness</td></tr> <tr> <td>Right Concentration</td></tr> </table>	Wisdom	Right Understanding	Right Aspiration	Morality	Right Speech	Right Action	Right Livelihood	Concentration	Right Effort	Right Mindfulness	Right Concentration	<p><b>The Threefold way</b></p> <p>The Eightfold path is broken into three sections</p> <p>Ethics (sila)=emphasis on the importance of good morals &amp; behaviour</p> <p>meditation (samadhi)=importance of meditating to develop wisdom</p> <p>Wisdom (Panna)=importance of overcoming ignorance to</p>
Wisdom		Right Understanding										
	Right Aspiration											
Morality	Right Speech											
	Right Action											
	Right Livelihood											
Concentration	Right Effort											
	Right Mindfulness											
	Right Concentration											



## KEY BELIEFS BUDDHISM

	<p><b>Karuna</b></p> <p>Showing compassion for others</p>
	<p><b>Metta</b></p> <p>Loving-Kindness</p>
	<p><b>The Three Marks of Existence</b></p> <p>The three characteristics of all living beings</p> <p>Dukkha—suffering</p> <p>Anicca—Impermanence—nothing stays the same</p> <p>Anatta—No fixed self or soul</p>
	<p><b>The Four Sights</b></p> <p>The Buddha saw four sights when he left the palace for the first time which made him embark on his journey of Buddhism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Age</li> <li>• Sick Man</li> <li>• Dead Man</li> <li>• Holy Man</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Kamma</b></p> <p>The Buddhist principle that our actions in this life will affect our rebirth into the next into the wheel of life.</p>
	<p><b>Samsara</b></p> <p>The cycle of birth, death and rebirth—Buddhists aim to break this cycle to reach enlightenment.</p>

## KEY BELIEFS BUDDHISM



### The Five Moral Precepts

- to refrain from taking life, ie killing any living creature.
- to refrain from taking what is not freely given, ie theft.
- to refrain from misuse of the senses i.e. drinking alcohol
- To refrain from sexual misconduct i.e. rape/ adultery
- to refrain from wrong speech, ie lying or gossiping.



### The Three Refuges (Jewels)

Buddhists take refuge in the Three Jewels or Triple Gem. The Three Jewels are:

The Buddha, the fully enlightened one

The Dharma, the teachings expounded by the Buddha

The Sangha , the Buddhist community



### The six perfections

The six things a Mahayana Buddhist follows to become a Bodhisattva

- Generosity
- Meditation
- Wisdom
- Morality
- Patience
- Energy



## TASK ONE



It is important that you learn these key beliefs now. They are important to each section of the course and will help you understand new topics as well as save you a lot of revision work later on. The easiest way to do them is to make them into flash cards and that way you can test yourself or get others to test you. The pictures are really important to help you learn the key detail so make sure they are on one side of the card.

## TASK TWO

The key beliefs can be used to help you work out what a Buddhist would think about different situations we face in life. Below are a number of situations. Use the key beliefs to say what a Buddhist might do. The first one is done for you as an example. This example has two responses but not all of them will.

<b>Abortion</b>	Many Buddhists will apply the First Moral Precept which says that you should abstain from harming any living thing and therefore be against the idea of abortion. However, some Buddhists would apply the idea of karuna (compassion). For example if a baby was to be born with a condition that gives it lifelong suffering they may argue abortion would be the more compassionate action.
<b>Acts of racism</b>	
<b>Terrorism</b>	
<b>Capital Punishment</b>	
<b>Giving to charity</b>	



Using nuclear weapons	
Helping victims of war	
Use of contraception	
Homosexuality	
Assisted suicide	
Breaking the law	

## SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA—THE FOUNDER OF BUDDHISM

It is important that you learn early on in the course about the background of 'The Buddha' because his experiences influenced his teachings. Below is the story of Siddhartha Gautama. Read carefully and complete the tasks below which are designed to help you remember the key points.

### The Birth of the Buddha

The stories attached to the conception and birth of the Buddha are rather remarkable. The Buddha's mother was called Queen Maya and his father was called King Suddhodana – he was the leader of the Shakya tribe. When Maya was pregnant with the Buddha, she dreamt that a pure white elephant entered her womb – there are variations of this but it always includes a pure white elephant. Believing in the importance of dreams, she and Suddhodana went to the advisors to ask what it meant. When it was getting closer to the birth, it was traditional for mums to return to their parents to give birth. So on the way home – at a place called Lumbini, Maya gives birth to Siddhartha Gautama in the garden in Lumbini.

This garden was near the kingdom of Nepal, at the foot of the Himalayan mountains. Tradition says that when Siddhartha was born, Maya's birth pains were practically non-existent. When Siddhartha was born, he took seven steps – where his foot touched the ground a lotus flower sprang up. Then, at the seventh stride, he stopped and with a noble voice, he spoke: **"This is my last birth, there is no more coming to be"**. That the man known as the Buddha was a real historical person is not seriously disputed nowadays. However, it is very difficult to establish the exact details of his life history 2,500 years after it happened. The stories and teachings of the Buddha were passed down orally until they were written down several hundred years later.

### The Naming Ceremony

King Suddhodana had an old teacher who was known to be very wise. He was called Asita the Sage. Asita visited the newly born Siddhartha. The king was very happy to see his wise old teacher again. In the palace, after the sage was seated, the king brought the prince before him and said, "Teacher, my son was born only yesterday. Here he is. Please see if his future will be good." Asita predicted that the new born baby would either be a great leader – like his father – or a wise religious leader. King Suddhodana decided that he wanted his son to become a great leader – like himself – so he devised a plan that would imprison his son in luxury.

### The Buddha's life of luxury

On the seventh day after his birth, **Prince Siddhartha's mother died**. The king had another queen, who was called Prajapati Gotami. She was the younger sister of Queen Maha Maya, and she had given birth to a son on the same day that Queen Maha Maya died. Prince Siddhartha could not remember his own mother. To stop Siddhartha from thinking about issues that may have influenced him to become a religious person, his father provided an environment that didn't include any kind of suffering – it was all removed. Siddhartha Gautama was imprisoned in paradise – he wasn't allowed to leave the grounds of his 'palace'.

### The Four Sights

We have seen that Siddhartha grew up in a palace in a life of luxury, shielded from the rest of the world. However, Siddhartha grew curious and wanted to explore outside the palace walls. Traditional Buddhist stories say that one day at the age of 29, despite his father's orders, Siddhartha decided to leave the palace grounds with Channa – his chariot driver – to the nearest city. Siddhartha then encountered four sights that had a profound effect on his life. The story of the four sights is recorded in Jataka 075 – the Jatakas are texts that record many Buddhist stories:

King Suddhodhana took every precaution to prevent Siddhattha from any sight, which could inspire him to become an ascetic (a holy person who lives a strict lifestyle) ever since he was born.

When prince Siddhattha was twenty-nine, the *devas* (god-like beings) felt that it was time for him to attain Enlightenment. So, they instilled a desire in his heart to visit the park. On the way, he encountered an old man, who was walking with the help of a stick. Shocked with the stark reality - that everybody becomes old and no mortal can escape it - he returned home in serious mood.

When the king learnt of his mental shock he made every object of mundane pleasure available to his son. Nonetheless, the prince was not interested in the worldly pleasure. Next day, he again went to the park. There he saw a sick person; and felt that disease too, is a reality of life, which no one can escape. On the third day, he saw a corpse; and realised that death is another reality, which no one can escape. Thus, he realised the triviality of the mundane life, which is bound to crumble; because if one is born one would undergo the process of ageing, sickness, death and all kinds of suffering. Even the mightiest of all monarchs are not capable of overpowering those realities of life.

Next, on the full-moon day he saw an ascetic. Curious, he asked his charioteer Channa about the identity of the person. Channa then informed him that the person was an ascetic, who had renounced the world in pursuit of eternal bliss. He also praised the ideals of an ascetic. The ascetic's resolution to renounce the worldly life in quest of the truth infused greater happiness in his heart and inspired him to lead the life of an ascetic.

### Leaving the palace

Finding the answer to the problem of suffering became the most important thing in Siddhartha's life. However, he knew that if he stayed in the palace, he would find no answers. It is said that on the night his own son Rahula was born, he left the palace for good in search of an answer. He got up quietly, kissed his wife and new-born son, woke Channa, and they crept past the sleeping guards and silently rode away from the palace. When they reached the edge of a river, they dismounted from their horses. Taking his sword, Siddhartha cut off his hair and swapped his rich clothes for the clothes of a beggar. He gave all his rings and bracelets to Channa to take back to his father. Channa watched as Siddhartha crossed the river and disappeared into the forest on the other side. By giving up his possessions and the symbol of his previous life, Siddhartha was letting go of the things that he thought were keeping him ignorant and which were resulting in suffering. Later he was to teach that renunciation – a 'letting go' – was important in reaching enlightenment.

#### TASK ONE

On the next page, design a comic strip or story board which highlights the key points of the Buddha's early life.

Choose simple pictures to illustrate these key points. These simple pictures (almost like an icon or a logo) will help you to remember and revise this section of the course and can be transferred later on to flash cards.



## Early Life of The Buddha—Revision Board

## TASK TWO

There are many different accounts of the Birth of the Buddha and his life as he grew up. Research on line some of these accounts and record the differences or new stories below.

[illegible]

Why do you think there are so many different accounts of the Buddha's birth and his life of luxury?

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Two traditional stories told about the Buddha's early life recall his visit to the ploughing festival and his encounter with a swan. Research these two stories. Briefly describe each and say why you think each event seemed to have such a profound effect on Siddhartha.

[illegible]

### TASK THREE

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zr3sv9q/revision/1>

Re-read the section on the Four Sights or review the information on the website above. Using this information complete the questions below to show you have considered the impact of this event on the life of the Buddha.

1. How do you think you would feel on seeing each of the sights for the first time? Give reasons.

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2. Explain what you think Siddhartha learned from seeing these sights and which of the sights in your opinion, if any, had the greatest impact on him. Give your reasons.

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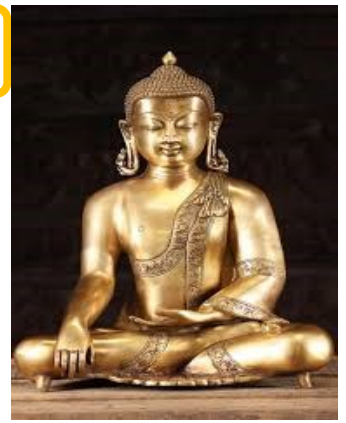
As you continue to learn about the Buddha's teachings, remember how they were influenced by his encounter with the four sights.





## GETTING TO KNOW BUDDHISM

Buddhism is a religion without a belief in a supreme being or a god. As Buddhism spread to different countries and different cultures different types of Buddhism began to develop. In this GCSE we will concentrate on two types of Buddhism—**Theravada** and **Mahayana**.



**TASK ONE** Using the following links find out about each types of Buddhism. Look for the countries in which they are found and any key beliefs about the Buddha's teaching or how Buddhism should be practised.

### THERAVADA

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/subdivisions/theravada\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/subdivisions/theravada_1.shtml)

### MAHAYANA

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/buddhism/subdivisions/mahayana.shtml>

**TASK TWO** The images of the Buddha at the top of the page are from India, the images at the bottom are from China. Use the internet to look at more Chinese and Indian images of the Buddha. What are the main differences between the images? Try to suggest reasons for the differences. Record your answers on the next page.



VOCABULARY

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a/teach/subject-specific-vocabulary-component-1-the-study-of-religions-beliefs,-teachings-and-practices>

Using the AQA website above find the key words which you will need to learn in order to study Buddhism at GCSE.

WORD OR PHRASE	MEANING
Anatta	
Anicca	
Buddha	
Dharma	
Dukkha	
Enlightenment	
Five Moral Precepts	
Four Noble Truths	
Karma	
Mahayana	
Nirvana	
Theravada	
Three Poisons	



## ASSESSMENT SECTION

12 Mark questions on the AQA Religious Studies A exam paper test your ability to evaluate the topics you learn about. It is therefore important that you start to practise these early on. Below are two 12 mark questions, one from Buddhism and one from Christianity. There is also a lot of guidance on how to answer these questions. Read through the following information on 12 mark questions then attempt the assessment questions.



The easiest way to structure your 12 mark question is to follow the F.A.R.M method.

Always have a paragraph that is **FOR** the statement.

Always have a paragraph that is **AGAINST** the statement.

Always include **RELIGIOUS** opinion on the statement

Always include **MY** opinion on the statement



Practise will always make perfect so the more you do the **F.A.R.M** technique the easier it will become. To make writing the answer even more straightforward divide it into **THREE** distinct paragraphs. One paragraph containing arguments **FOR** the statement, one paragraph containing arguments **AGAINST** the statement, all paragraphs should mention a **RELIGIOUS** view including a third concluding paragraph containing **MY** (your) **OPINION**.

### Question 1 Christianity

To answer this question refer to the section on Festivals in the Christianity section. Use the guidance below (which follows the F.A.R.M technique and structure) to help.

### ‘Christmas is the most important festival Christian festival.’ Evaluate (12)

#### Arguments FOR

More is made of Christmas in terms of celebration such as nativity plays, and carol services, decorations and presents

More people know about Christmas than Easter

People get more time off work at Christmas than Easter showing it is more important.

#### Arguments AGAINST

All Christians would argue against this point.

Christmas is important because it celebrates incarnation

But Easter is more important because it celebrates the resurrection which is the most important belief in Christianity. Explain this using words such as crucifixion, forgiveness, life after death, and atonement.

## Conclusion and My Opinion

Say what you think about the arguments for and against and why you think this.

Give your opinion on the original statement and why you think this. You could begin this final part with the phrase 'In conclusion....'.

**Other arguments you could add into your first two paragraphs –**

Christmas has been more commercialised than Easter – give examples of this for Christmas and Easter.

For Christians Easter is definitely the more important festival but other people may be confused because of the way non-religious people celebrate it and how it is commercialised.

[illegible]

## Question 2

This really asking you to answer the question 'If the Buddha hadn't seen old age, illness, death and the holy man he wouldn't have thought about religion? To help you answer this question go back to the information and your research on the Four Sights. Use the same F.A.R.M format as with question one and use the guidance below.

### **'Without the Four Sights, Buddhism wouldn't exist'. Evaluate (12)**

#### **Arguments FOR**

The four sights are all things which make us ask the big questions about religion such as is there an afterlife; why is there suffering in the world; what is the purpose of life?

The sights taught him things which led specifically to teachings about reducing suffering, how to prevent suffering, how to deal with the inevitable things this is what Buddhism is all about.

If the Buddha had stayed in the palace he wouldn't have seen these things specifically that have shaped what Buddhism is today.

#### **Arguments AGAINST**

You don't need to see these specific things to raise these big questions. Everyone thinks about these things whatever background they come from.

No one could be ever totally shielded even within a palace, he would have known about these things and questioned these things.

It is just a story to show why the Buddha was interested in these particular issues; to suggest where his teachings came from.

#### **Conclusion and My Opinion**

Say what you think about the arguments for and against and why you think this.

Give your opinion on the original statement and why you think this. You could begin this final part with the phrase 'In conclusion....'.

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