

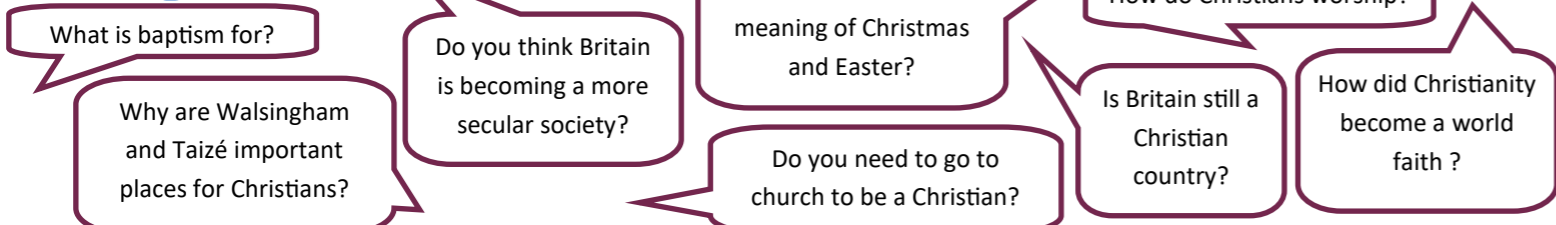
# C2.2 Christian Practices

Key Concepts

- Sacraments**—An outward sign of an invisible and inward blessing by God, for example baptism, Eucharist
- Evangelism**—Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention of converting others to the Christian faith
- Atonement**—The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.
- Commitment**— A sense of dedication and obligation to someone or something
- Ecumenical**— Representing or promoting unity within the different Christian Churches
- Persecution**—hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs; oppression.

Are there any common beliefs and features in the Christian churches?

## Core Questions



## Christianity in Britain

59.3%

## ROLE OF THE CHURCH



Christianity was introduced to Britain by the Romans almost 2000 years ago. This long history means it is deeply embedded and The Church of England is the 'established' religion of England. In 16<sup>th</sup> Century, King Henry VIII broke away from the Catholic Church and the authority of the Pope and made himself the head of the Church of England

### LAWS

Church of England has a direct role in shaping UK law. Meetings of both houses of parliament open with Christian prayers and many of the laws of the UK reflect the teaching of some of the Ten Commandments, e.g. 'Do not kill' and 'Do not steal.'

### FESTIVALS

The Christian calendar influences UK public holidays, e.g. Christmas and Easter are still widely celebrated in UK. School holidays fall over these times and many businesses will close

### TRADITIONS

Traditionally, Sunday is the 'day of rest' for Christians to go to church. As a result, shop opening hours on a Sunday are restricted. In a UK court, most witnesses still swear on the Bible that they are telling the truth. Christian hymns and readings are often used at public events, for example at Remembrance Sunday. Lots of people in UK mark important life events, like marriage in a church, even if they might not be religious.

Primarily a church is a place of worship, but as part of living out the values Jesus demonstrated in the Gospels, churches reach out into communities in a variety of ways.

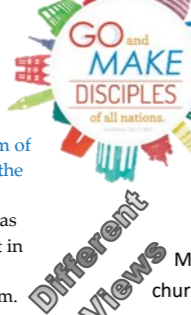
- Refreshments after Sunday service
- Meals for the homeless
- Food banks
- Coffee mornings for the elderly
- Youth clubs
- Crèche facilities for young mothers
- Summer fairs/fetes
- Organisations like cubs and brownies
- Fitness classes or slimming groups
- Family and community centres
- Emergency shelters
- Blood donations

## Sacraments

**EUCCHARIST**  
Also known as Mass or Holy Communion. Started by Jesus at the Last Supper. Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples, telling them they represent his body and blood. He said that they should do this in his memory after his death. Taking the Eucharist brings Christians closer to God 'Eucharist' means 'thanksgiving'. It is an act of thanksgiving for the life and death of Jesus and for the Christian faith. Eucharist services are an example of liturgical worship – they have a set structure and the same rituals happen each time.



- Baptism:** Initiates people into the Christian church. Catholics believe that it washes away sin. Many churches practice infant baptism, though some only allow adults to be baptised.
- Confirmation:** When a baptised person becomes old enough, they commit to the church themselves. They remake the promises made by their parents and godparents.
- Eucharist:** Worshippers share bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus' death.
- Penance:** (Also known as Reconciliation or Confession). Catholics confess their sins to a priest, can 'absolve' (free) them from their sins after they do something to atone for their wrongdoing.
- Marriage:** Spiritual union of the couple and God.
- Holy Orders:** Joining the priesthood of the church. This is known as being 'ordained'.



Most denominations only recognise Baptism and Eucharist as Sacraments—only the Catholic church recognised all seven! They are still considered holy rituals but not given the title of

## BAPTISM

It is seen as the first sacraments – a 'covenant' between humans and God. Jesus said: "No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." It follows the example Jesus set, who was baptised as an adult by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. Original sin is removed through baptism.

## Worship & Prayer

Prayer is how someone communicates with God. Jesus taught the early disciples to pray 'Go to your room, close the door and pray to your Father in Heaven' Matthew 6:6. In the Church of England, they believe that each Christian is, in their own way, a priest and can have direct access to God through Christ. Many people pray alone, but many find spiritual support from praying together, believing that they are following the instructions of Jesus, who encouraged his followers to pray together 'Where two or more are gathered in my name I am there with them'

Prayers can be:  
Spontaneous Informal Set  
Set prayers are useful because they are part of the tradition and ritual of worship that goes back centuries. Set prayers were originally passed on by word of mouth before being written down. Many Protestant denominations, e.g. the Church of England, use the set prayers in the Book of Common Prayer.

### Informal Worship

Worship that doesn't have a set pattern. It is spontaneous in structure. Services in Evangelical denominations are often more informal than traditional worship.

### Individual Worship

This takes place in addition to worshipping together in a church. Christians believe that it is important to form a personal relationship with God and worshipping alone is a part of this. Set and informal prayers are an important part of all Christian worship. Worship can also involve:

- Music
- Singing hymns
- Liturgical Worship**
  - Follows a set pattern
  - Has established rituals
  - Public church worship
  - Can include the Lord's prayer (important for Protestant denominations, like Church of England)
  - Eucharist, Holy Communion or Mass, is a form of liturgical worship (important for Roman Catholics)

### Evangelical Worship

Evangelical worship is informal. Christians are moved by the Holy Spirit during worship. This may involve them falling into trances or even speaking in unknown languages (speaking in tongues). Movement and participation is encouraged and there is often music, singing and dancing in the congregation.

## Worldwide Church

Jesus was a martyr (died for his faith) and he warned the disciples that they would be persecuted for their faith. Christians believe they were given a divine duty from Jesus to spread the good news of the Gospel and this may be in the face of personal danger. Even nowadays Christians are treated unjustly in societies where Christian faith is a minority religion.

Evangelism is the way the gospel is spread and means, 'preaching the good news.' Every Christian is considered an evangelist (preacher of the gospel). It is the mission of the Church to help Christians live a life of faith and spread the message of salvation to all.

Many Christians see it as a duty or mission to convert other people to Christianity, whether they have no faith at all or belong to another religion. Missionaries also brought education and health support to poor and disadvantaged people around the world.

### tearfund

Tearfund are a Christian charity who aim to put Christian beliefs and Jesus' command to 'love your neighbour' into action. Christians believe they are putting into practice the unconditional or unselfish love (agape) that Jesus talks about in the Bible. Tearfund help the poor in over 50 countries, providing emergency aid when disasters occur and carrying out long-term projects to support local communities. In UK, many people support Tearfund by raising money through coffee mornings and buying Tearfund Christmas cards.

## Ecumenical Movement

'Ecumenical' means many Christian Churches. The movement aims to, unite all Christians. Although denominational differences still exist, today many Christians believe there should

## World Council of Churches

"The aim of these churches is to be a 'visible sign, deepening communion, sharing the Gospel together and making connections.'"

Each year the World Council of Churches (WCC) holds a special week of prayer for Christian unity. It brings together churches in more than 110 countries. The Roman Catholic Church isn't a member of the WCC but it does take part in some organisations.

### Open Doors

- Open Doors was established in 1955. They:
  - Distribute Bibles to support Christians' faith
  - Provide practical support for Christians who have been victims of disasters
  - Speak on behalf of persecuted Christians to raise awareness

## Pilgrimage

In Christianity, pilgrims might travel to the Holy Land to 'walk in the footsteps of Jesus'. Pilgrims believe that life itself is a journey towards God. A pilgrimage is faith in action, the journey representing the journey that all Christians undertake from earth to heaven.

## Walsingham

Walsingham is in Norfolk. It has been a holy place since 1061 when the widow of the Lord of the Pava had a dream where she asked her to build a of Nazareth where the birth of Jesus took place – by the Angel Gabriel that child. Walsingham is important because our human and Walsingham is a shrine to the place where Jesus' birth was foretold.

Manor of Walsingham the Virgin Mary replica of the house announcement of the where Mary was told she would have God's child. Walsingham is important because our human and Walsingham is a shrine to

Other places of pilgrimage are:

- Jerusalem
- Lourdes

## Taizé

Pilgrims from all Christian denominations - travel to Taizé to live a life of communal prayer. It is unusual because it is Ecumenical, meaning it represents unity within the different Christian churches.

It is one of the world's most important pilgrimage sites for young people. Over 100,000 people make pilgrimages to Taizé each year. Young people pilgrimage to Taizé because:

- Adventure
- Act of remembrance
- An attempt to walk in the footsteps of people of faith
- Act of atonement
- Act of supplication (asking God for something)

## Holy Lands/Israel

Many visit the places where Jesus lived, especially during the Christian festivals (for example, Bethlehem, where he was born, at Christmas; Jerusalem, the place where he died, at Easter).