

GCSE Religious Studies Christianity Knowledge Organiser

Christian beliefs about God

Key concepts

omnibenevolence	incarnation
omnipotence	resurrection
omniscience	agapé
Holy Spirit	atonement
Messiah	divine command
Trinity	inter-faith dialogue

Relevant sources of authority

Genesis Chapters 1–3 can be used to show the creation, the nature and role of humans, e.g. **“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”** (Genesis 1:1), **“God blessed them and said to them ... Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground”** (Genesis 1:28), **“And God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die’** (Genesis 2:16-17).

In the Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32), God is likened to a forgiving father.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3). This shows the Christian belief that Jesus (the Word) existed at the Creation.

“The Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14: 25-26), and **“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”** (Galatians 5:22-23), both show Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit.

Creator and Sustainer

God created and is still active in the world. God is **omnipotent** (all powerful), **omnipresent** (everywhere), **omniscient** (all knowing) and **omnibenevolent** (all good/loving). Christians believe that God continues to provide for humans and that he is in control of nature. They believe that they can pray to God for his help (e.g. to stop suffering).

Creation

God created the world out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Some Christians take the Bible account (Genesis Ch. 1-3) literally and believe that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. Other Christians do not take it literally; they believe God was responsible for creation but that it might not have happened in the way the Bible says. All Christians believe that the Creation stories show that humans have a responsibility to look after the world.

Nature of humanity

The Creation account tells Christians that God created humans **in his image** (“to be like himself” - Genesis 1:27), with a **soul**, the spiritual part that many believe will carry on after death. Humans were created to be **rational** and use intelligence to make decisions. People were created with a **sense of right and wrong**, but they also have **free will**, the ability to make their own decisions. Although they were told not to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and became aware of right and wrong. This is known as the **original sin**; since then, humans are believed to be **‘fallen’**, as their nature is to do evil. Christians also believe that God made people to be **creative** e.g. finding ways to make the best use of the world’s resources.

Trinity

Belief in the three persons of God: God the **Father**, God the **Son**, and God the **Holy Spirit**. Christians believe that all parts of the Trinity have existed for all time and are all equally powerful, wise, and good. God the Father is the creator of all things and has a parental relationship with humans. The Son is believed to have been with God at the creation before he became human in the form of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is believed to be God’s continuing presence in the world which reminds people of the teachings of Jesus and helps people to develop positive qualities.

Past exam questions

- Explain Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit. [8] SAMs
- Explain Christian beliefs about the nature of humanity. [8] 2018
- Explain Christian beliefs about the Creation of the world and human beings. [8] 2019
- “God must be sorry he ever created humans.” [15] SAMs

Links

Christianity – Jesus as God Incarnate.

Issues of Life and Death – the world, the origins of human life, beliefs about death & the afterlife.

Issues of Good and Evil – good, evil, and suffering.