

Core Christian Beliefs

God

Christians believe that there is only one God, whom they call Father as Jesus Christ taught them.

Jesus

Christians recognise Jesus as the Son of God who was sent to save mankind from death and sin.

Jesus Christ taught that he was Son of God. His teachings can be summarised, briefly as the love of God and love of one's neighbour.

Jesus said that he had come to fulfil God's law rather than teach it.

The Bible

The Bible is God's Word. Part of its purpose of the Bible is to reveal God to Christians. It is within the Bible that Christians can learn about God and his teachings. The Bible is God's self-revelation to humanity. The Bible also tells Christians about who they are. It tells Christians of their sin and of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Justification by faith

Christians believe in justification by faith - that through their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and in his death and resurrection, they can have a right relationship with God whose forgiveness was made once and for all through the death of Jesus Christ.

The Trinity

Christians believe in the Trinity - that is, in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Some confuse this and think that Christians believe in three separate gods, which they don't.

Christians believe that God took human form as Jesus Christ and that God is present today through the work of the Holy Spirit and evident in the actions of believers.

Life after death

Christians believe that there is a life after earthly death.

While the actual nature of this life is not known, Christians believe that many spiritual experiences in this life help to give them some idea of what eternal life will be like.

Prayer

Prayer is the means by which Christians communicate with their God.

The New Testament records that Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and that he encouraged them to address God as *Father*. Christians believe that they continue this tradition.

Sometimes the prayers are formal and part of a ritual laid down for hundreds of years.

Others are personal and spontaneous, and come from personal or group need.

Whilst prayer is often directed to God as Father, as taught by Jesus, some traditions encourage prayer to God through intermediaries such as saints and martyrs.

Prayers through Mary, as the mother of God, are central to some churches and form a traditional part of their worship.

The Church

The Christian church is fundamental to believers. Although it has many faults it is recognised as God's body on earth.

The church is the place where the Christian faith is nurtured and where the Holy Spirit is manifest on earth. It is where Christians are received into the faith and where they are brought together into one body through the Eucharist.

Baptism

The Christian church believes in one *baptism* into the Christian church, whether this be as an infant or as an adult, as an outward sign of an inward commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

Eucharist

Eucharist is a Greek word for thanksgiving. Its celebration is to commemorate the final meal that Jesus took with his disciples before his death (the Last Supper).

This rite comes from the actions of Jesus who, at that meal, took bread and wine and asked his disciples to consume them and continue to do so in memory of him.

At the meal, the wine represented his blood and the bread his body.

The Eucharist (also known as a Communion meal in some churches) is central to the Church and is recognised as a sign of unity amongst Christians.

Different Churches understand and practice the Eucharist in different ways. As a result, the central ideas of the Eucharist can cause disharmony rather than unity.

For example, the idea that Christ is present in the bread and wine is interpreted literally by some churches and metaphorically by others. This has given rise to substantial and often irreconcilable disagreement.