



# Religion, Ethics and Philosophy

## A Level

### Summer Independent Learning

Bring all completed tasks to your first day in college in September.

## A. Introduction to Christianity for Philosophy and Ethics

Read the information and more detailed instructions on pages and complete the 4 tasks summarised below.

1. Research on important people and groups in Christianity.
2. Research on key locations in Christianity
3. Timeline of key events in Christianity
4. Write a 10 question quiz on key beliefs in Christianity.

You will be assessed on your work on an introduction of Christianity in a series of 10 question quizzes and summary activities over the first five weeks of the new term.

## B. Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

1. Read the information on the hyperlink

[https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16\\_15/pdf/arguments-for-existence-of-god/00-introduction.pdf](https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16_15/pdf/arguments-for-existence-of-god/00-introduction.pdf)

2. Complete the activities – remember to keep checking your answers until you get them all right.

[https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16\\_15/eng/arguments-for-existence-of-god/00-introduction/01-which-arguments.html](https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16_15/eng/arguments-for-existence-of-god/00-introduction/01-which-arguments.html)

3. a. Use the information and the right answers to the activity to complete the table below.

Deductive arguments	Inductive arguments	Fits both	Fits neither
e.g. The premises provide absolute proof for conclusions			

3. b. Use the information to define a priori and a posteriori premises.

4. Watch the following videos about the Cosmological Argument.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=The+cosmological+argument&&view=detail&mid=A95B459BB8DC69EE4C3FA95B459BB8DC69EE4C3F&rvsmid=7FC0C81206E4DCB916C07FC0C81206E4DCB916C0&fsscr=0&FORM=VDRVRV>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY> (just arguments 1-3)

- a. Is the cosmological inductive or deductive?
- b. Is the cosmological argument based on a priori or a posteriori premises?
- c. How does the cosmological argument attempt to prove the existence of God?

- d. Do you find the arguments convincing?

### **C. Introduction to Ethics**

1. Watch the video below and complete the following tasks.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOoffXFpAIU&list=PLa\\_ZSYFNmJvvttaPCcfY-xQljsJDyhMtWe](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOoffXFpAIU&list=PLa_ZSYFNmJvvttaPCcfY-xQljsJDyhMtWe)

- a. Write a definition of ethics.
- b. Write a definition of meta-ethics.
- c. What is moral realism?
- d. What are the problems with moral realism?
- e. What is moral anti-realism?
- f. What are the problems with moral anti realism?
- g. What are moral relativism and moral absolutism?
- h. What do you think makes an action moral?

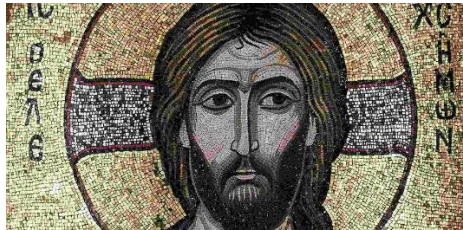
# Introduction to Christianity for Philosophy and Ethics Components

This Introduction will assist in understanding the Christian foundations for a number of topics within the Philosophy and Ethics components of the REP course.

You will be assessed on this material in a review of knowledge in the form of 10 point tests and summary activities over the first five weeks in college.

## Who Where When What?

### Who?



*Times are referred to as CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before Common Era), using the Year 0 as a starting point. Christians use the same system, referring to time as measured BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini 'The Year of our Lord').*

**Jesus of Nazareth 4 BCE to 30 CE** Conceived out of wedlock to Mary of Nazareth (virginal conception), raised by Mary and her husband Joseph. A stonemason by trade, embarks on 3 years of teaching and spreading his message about God's Kingdom, radical reformulation of Jewish teachings, inclusion of marginalised people; poor, sick, female, opposition to Jewish leaders and alleged miracles. Executed by Romans at Passover 30 AD. His followers believed he was raised from the dead 3 days later and appeared to them visibly for 40 days, before ascending to heaven after which the Holy Spirit (supernatural power of God) was given to the followers at Pentecost 10 days later, thus beginning the movement known as Christianity. Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of God in the Trinity, the Head of the Christian Church and that he will come again in glory at the end of time. The historian Josephus affirms the existence of Jesus.

**John the Baptist 4 BCE to 27 CE.** A possible relation of Jesus who lead a movement of radical Judaism emphasising repentance and baptism as a sign of a new attitude to life. Seen as a forerunner to Jesus.

**Mary of Nazareth 18 CE to 40 CE?** Mother of Jesus who outlived him and by tradition died in the care of the apostle John in Ephesus, Turkey in the 5<sup>th</sup> decade CE.

**The Twelve Apostles: 1<sup>st</sup> decade BCE to 7<sup>th</sup> Decade CE:** Selected by Jesus to be his core group of followers: Peter; James and John, Andrew; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus to the authorities leading to his arrest and execution. Peter became the first leader of the Early Church and was executed in Rome on the Vatican Hill (site of modern St. Peter's Rome, by inverted crucifixion...archaeological discoveries suggest his body is actually buried beneath St. Peter's). Several other apostles also spread Christianity to various parts of the early Christian world and were martyred (killed for their faith).

**Mary Magdalene 1st Decade BCE to ?** One of several important female disciples who though not part of the 12 Apostles were prominent among Jesus' followers, staying with him even up to his execution and burial. Mary Magdalene may have come from the town of Magdala or Magdala may be a nickname given by Jesus meaning 'The Tower'. She was the first person to receive news from Jesus of his Resurrection on Easter morning and was told to spread this news to the apostles.

**Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The Four Evangelists 1<sup>st</sup> Decade BCE-8/9<sup>th</sup> Decade CE.** The names given to the authors of the Four Gospels. Matthew and John may have been apostles, Mark was a friend of Paul of Tarsus, and Luke (who also wrote Acts of the Apostles) was a Greek non-Jew. The Gospel's authorship may have been by one or several authors, using the name of the evangelist as a patron for the community for whom the gospel was written.

**Paul of Tarsus: 5-64/67 CE** Convert from Conservative Judaism to Christianity in 30s CE to become the travelling missionary responsible for spreading Christianity around the Mediterranean basin in the first decades of the early Church. Wrote many letters, which form part of the Christian New Testament (Bible). Executed by beheading in Rome.

**Irenaeus of Lyons 130 – 202 CE** was a Greek bishop noted for his role in guiding and expanding Christian communities in what is now the south of France and, more widely, for the development of Christian theology by combatting heresy and defining orthodoxy. Irenaeus will be a key figure in our Philosophy course.

**Augustine of Hippo: 354 –430 CE** was a Roman African, early Christian theologian and philosopher from Numidia whose writings influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy. A very influential figure in *all three* of this course's components.

**Thomas Aquinas (Thomas of Aquino)"1225 – 1274** was an Italian Dominican friar, Philosopher, Catholic priest, and Doctor of the Church. He is an immensely influential philosopher, theologian, and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism. Aquinas is *very important* in all three components.

**Martin Luther 1483- 1546** was a German professor of theology, composer, priest, monk, and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation.

**John Calvin 1509 –1564** was a French theologian, pastor and reformer in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology later called Calvinism, aspects of which include the doctrines of predestination and of the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation of the human soul from death and eternal damnation.

**Tom Wright 1948-present** is an English New Testament scholar, Pauline theologian, and retired Anglican bishop. Between 2003 and 2010, he was the Bishop of Durham. He then became Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Mary's College in the University of St Andrews in Scotland.

**Dominic Crossan 1934-present** is an Irish-American New Testament scholar, historian of early Christianity, and former Catholic priest who was a prominent member of The Jesus Seminar. His research has focused on the historical Jesus, on the cultural anthropology of the Ancient Mediterranean and New Testament worlds and on the application of postmodern hermeneutical approaches to the Bible.

**Mary Daly 1928-2010** was an American radical feminist philosopher, academic, and theologian. Daly, who described herself as a "radical feminist", taught at the Jesuit-run Boston College for 33 years. Daly retired in 1999.

**Rosemary Radford Ruether 1936-present** is an American feminist scholar and Catholic theologian. Ruether is an advocate of women's ordination, a movement among Catholic religious persons who affirm women's capacity to serve as priests, despite official sanction.

**Gustavo Gutierrez 1928-present** is a Peruvian philosopher, theologian, and Dominican priest regarded as one of the founders of liberation theology.

**Leonardo Boff 1938-present** is a Brazilian theologian and writer, known for his active support for liberation theology.

## **Roman Catholics**

The Catholic Church, also known as the Roman Catholic Church, is the largest Christian Church, with approximately 1.3 billion baptised Catholics worldwide as of 2017. As the world's oldest continuously functioning international institution, it has played a prominent role in the history and development of Western civilisation. The church is headed by the Bishop of Rome, known as the Pope. Its central administration, the Holy See, is in the Vatican City, an enclave within the city of Rome in Italy.

## **Orthodox Christians**

The Eastern Orthodox Church, officially the Orthodox Catholic Church, is the third-largest Christian church, with approximately 200–260 million baptised members. It formed after the Great Schism in 1054 when the Eastern Church separated from The Western Church after centuries of theological and political differences. It operates as a communion of autocephalous churches, each governed by its bishops in local synods, although roughly half of Eastern Orthodox Christians live in Russia. The church has no central doctrinal or governmental authority analogous to the Bishop of Rome, but the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople is recognised by all as *primus inter pares* ("first among equals") of the bishops. As one of the oldest surviving religious institutions in the world, the Eastern Orthodox Church has played a prominent role in the history and culture of Eastern and South eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and the Near East.

## **Protestant Christians**

Protestantism is the second largest form of Christianity with collectively between 800 million and more than 900 million adherents worldwide or nearly 40% of all Christians. It originated with the 16th century Reformation, a movement against what its followers perceived to be errors in the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants reject the Roman Catholic doctrine of papal supremacy and sacraments, but disagree among themselves regarding the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. They emphasize the priesthood of all believers, justification by faith alone (*sola fide*) rather than by good works, and the highest authority of the Bible alone (rather than with sacred tradition) in faith and morals (*sola scriptura*). The "five solae" summarise basic theological differences in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.

## **Clergy, Religious and Lay People**

Most Christian Churches have leaders, some placing more emphasis on them than others. Often these leaders may be called 'clergy'. Some Protestant denominations (groups within a broader branch of Christianity e.g. Methodists are a denomination within Protestant Christianity) have no leaders as such (e.g. Quakers), but at a basic organisational level, even these groups need some leadership structure. Many Christian Churches have a very organised system of leadership. Local leaders are called Priests, Pastors, Ministers, Vicars etc. who may be in charge of a parish or smaller geographical area or a particular small community. They may be assisted by Deacons who share some of their work. A local geographical area may be called a Diocese and this is normally lead by a Bishop. The most important dioceses in a country are led by an Archbishop. Roman Catholics have a main leader in the Bishop of Rome called the Pope. A group of about 120 men usually bishops are made into Cardinals whose main job is to elect a new Pope after the death or resignation of a previous Pope. Orthodox Christians are led by Patriarchs and some Protestants like the Anglican Communion also have a 'figure of unity' e.g. the Archbishop of Canterbury. In Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, all leaders are male only. Many Protestant denominations now have female clergy. Some Christian denominations also have people who live in what is known as 'religious life', living in a community where men are called monks or religious brothers and women called nuns or religious sisters. The remaining members of a Church are sometimes known as 'lay people' and are often nowadays encouraged to play an active role in supporting and sometimes leading their communities.

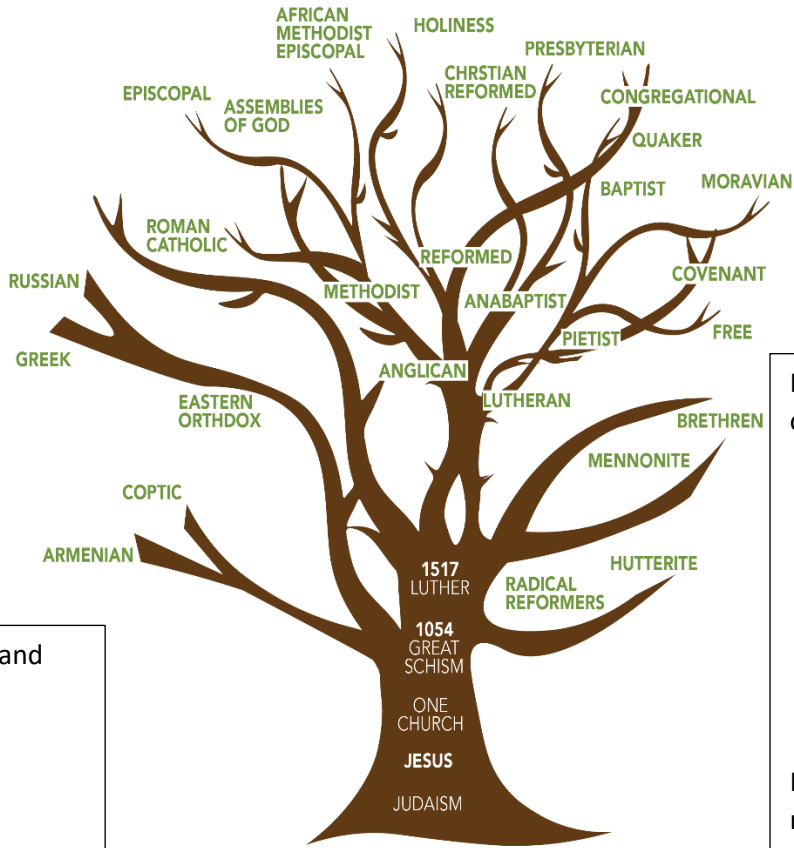
## **Saints**

Saints are men and women who have died, that the Christian community believe to be with God in Heaven where they can act as a role model in the Christian life and for some Christians intercede to God for them.

**Task 1 – People and groups**

**Complete the diagram below**

Add  
Five facts about the  
Eastern Orthodox Church.



How many baptised  
Catholics were there in  
2017?

Who is the head of the  
Catholic Church?

Briefly explain the origins  
of Protestantism.

Extra research – How  
many baptised  
Protestant are there  
approximately per year.

What was the Great Schism and  
why did it happen?

Add – five key points about Jesus.

Who else was important in the early church?

## Where

Palestine-Israel in the 1<sup>st</sup> C CE was occupied by the Romans and administered by a Roman Pro-consul and a puppet King.

### The early Christian Church

#### Galilee

Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee. This northern territory of Palestine was also his most important area of activity. Apart from the larger towns of Sepphoris and Tiberias Galilee was a country area, and agriculture was the main occupation. The Lake of Gennesaret was famous for its fishing. Jesus is said to have found his first disciples among fishermen (Mark 1:16-29). In the time of Jesus Galilee was surrounded by a number of Greek cities. The rest of the area was Jewish. Nazareth where Jesus lived for 30 years is in Galilee and many of the Gospel stories are set in Galilee.

#### Samaria

South of Galilee lived the Samaritans, a mixed population resulting from political transfers of population, whom the Jews did not consider to be real Jews. While the Jewish Temple was situated on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the Samaritans regarded Mt. Gerizim as sacred. They recognized as Holy Scripture only the five books of Moses, and the textual form they used was different from that in use among the Jews.

#### Judaea

The name Judaea had two different senses. Firstly, it meant the area surrounding Jerusalem, secondly it meant the whole area inhabited by Jews, which finally became a Roman province. The mountainous region surrounding Jerusalem is dry and bare. To the east is the Dead Sea. In the oasis area north of the Dead Sea is Jericho, which is thought to be one of the oldest towns in the world. Bethlehem where Jesus was born is close to Jerusalem in Judaea

#### Jerusalem

To the Jews Jerusalem was the centre of the world, where God dwelt in the Temple. The Jews went there on pilgrimage at least once a year. It was also the economic, administrative and cultural centre. The Roman administration of Palestine was directed from Caesarea. Jesus was executed in Jerusalem, buried there and his followers believe resurrected. The early Christian Church spread from this city.





## Lands of Paul's Missionary Journeys

Undertaken at various times in the opening decades of the Christian Church, Paul and his companions travelled very widely around the Mediterranean basin and so all of the destinations on the map below are significant to Christians, as the centres for early Christianity:



## Northern Africa

Many parts of what is now Northern Africa were significant in early Christianity thanks in part to the spread of the Roman Empire. Hippo in modern Algeria was where Augustine one of the most influential Christian writers, theologians and philosophers was located. Ethiopia was also a very major centre for early Christianity.

## Rome

Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire and Christianity spread readily to this city. Early Christians were widely persecuted by successive Emperors and Paul and Peter were probably executed here. When the Emperor Constantine 'converted' to Christianity, it became the official Imperial religion and so Christianity became centred on Rome. Rome is also the modern headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, where the Vatican (an independent city state is located). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican council 1962-1965 was held here, a council which reformed and revolutionised Roman Catholicism.

## Nicaea

Nicaea was an ancient Greek city in northwestern Anatolia (Turkey), and is primarily known as the site of the First (325 CE) and Second Councils of Nicaea (787 CE) (the first and seventh Ecumenical councils in the early history of the Christian Church), the Nicene Creed (which comes from the First Council).

## Constantinople

Constantinople was the capital city of the Roman Empire (330–395), of the Byzantine Empire (395–1204 and 1261–1453), and also of the brief Crusader state known as the Latin Empire (1204–1261). It was the capital of the Ottoman Empire (1453–1923). In 1923 the capital was removed and the name changed to Istanbul. The city was located in what is now the European side and the core of modern Istanbul. It was a major centre for Christianity until the 13<sup>th</sup> C.

## Northern and Central Europe

Germany was where the Protestant Reformation began and from which it quickly spread in 1517 thanks to Martin Luther from the German city of Wittenberg. It rapidly spread to many other regions in Northern Europe, Scandinavia and England, Wales and Scotland and Central Europe. Switzerland became the centre for many Reformation ideas, particularly those of John Calvin.

Christianity had been present in the British Isles since at least the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Canterbury was the headquarters of the English Church, which became the Protestant Church in England under Henry VIII and his successors, and Canterbury remains the headquarters of the Anglican Communion founded to include all international Anglican Churches in 1867. The Archbishop of Canterbury is a focus of unity for this Protestant Church and in England the Queen is the head of the C of E.

## Trento

This northern Italian town was the location for the Council of the Roman Catholic Church convened to reform the RC Church (1545-1563) after the Reformation. Many of its decrees and teachings influenced Catholicism for over 400 years until Vatican II.

## Latin America, USA, Africa and Asia

In the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, these continents have witnessed some of the most significant changes in global Christianity, which has spread to every corner of the populated world. From Latin America, Liberation theology emerged as a movement to locate Christianity at the core of the experiences of the poor, marginalised and oppressed peoples of these nations. (In a separate development in the USA, Feminist Theology emerged to bring Christianity into the experiences of the oppression of women). Meanwhile a much more right-wing/conservative movement of Christianity has emerged from African/Caribbean culture in the form of Pentecostalism, which in spreading to Asia and Latin America is currently the fastest growing branch of Christianity.

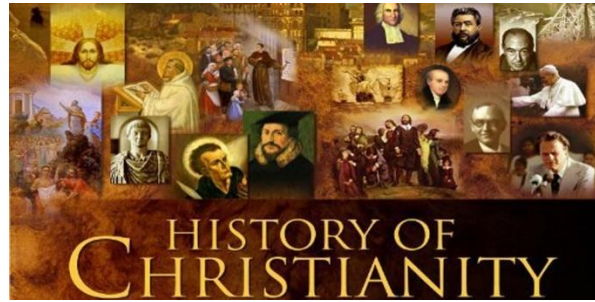
### Task 2 – research on key locations

Read all the information above – it is all relevant.

**Choose TWO of the following and do some further research to compile an A4 page of *hand-written* notes to show what you have discovered about your chosen topics:**

- The early Christian Church
- Paul's Missionary journeys
- The Great Schism
- The Protestant Reformation
- The spread of Global Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries

## WHEN



<b>c.2100 BCE</b>	<b>Calling of Abraham - the Father of the Jewish nation.</b>
c.1900 BCE	Joseph is sold into slavery in Egypt. Israelites eventually become captives in the land.
c.1446 or 1290 BCE	The Exodus begins. Led by Moses, the Israelites leave Egypt and eventually settle in Canaan.
c.1010 BCE	David becomes king of Israel, making Jerusalem his capital.
c.970 BCE	David's son Solomon becomes king. He later builds a temple in Jerusalem to honour God.
c.930 BCE	Following Solomon's death, the Kingdom is divided into two sections: Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah).
586 BCE	Babylonians take Jerusalem and destroy Solomon's temple. Jewish nation is taken into captivity in Babylon (the exile).
c.330 BCE	Conquest by Alexander the Great. Rise of Hellenism (Greek culture).
c.250 BCE	Work begins to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek. This is known as the Septuagint or LXX.
63 BCE	Roman rule of Israel begins.
<b>c.4 BCE</b>	<b>Birth of Jesus Christ, in Bethlehem.</b>
<b>c.30 CE</b>	<b>Death of Jesus Christ.</b>
<b>c.33</b>	<b>Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). Sometimes known as the Birthday of the Church.</b>
c.48	Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). Gentile Christians accepted alongside those in the Jewish tradition.
c.60	First Gospel published (often thought to be that written by Mark).
c.90	Book of Revelation and Gospel of Saint John written.
161-80	Widespread persecution of Christians under Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. (Severe persecutions also occurred under the emperors Decius (249-251) and Diocletian (284-305)).
312	Roman emperor Constantine receives a vision of a flaming cross with the words ' <i>In hoc signo vinces</i> ': 'By this sign conquer'. Defeats rival Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge.
<b>313</b>	<b>Edict of Milan issued by Constantine - Christianity becomes a legal religion within the Roman empire.</b>
325	Constantine calls the first ecumenical council at Nicea. Arian heresy which declared Christ was a created being is refuted. Nicene Creed is drawn up, declaring Christ to be " <i>...Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father...</i> "
367	Saint Athanasius is the first to list all 27 New Testament books in his festal letter.
381	Ecumenical Council at Constantinople revises the Nicene creed to its current form.
397	Synod at Carthage ratifies the 27 books of the New Testament as sacred scripture.

451	Ecumenical council at Chalcedon affirms Christ as having two distinct natures united in one person (known as the 'Hypostatic Union').
553	Ecumenical council at Constantinople affirms teaching of previous councils.
589	Insertion of the <i>filioque</i> (Latin: 'and the son') into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed at a council in Toledo.
597	Following a mission authorised by Pope Gregory I, St. Augustine becomes the first Archbishop of Canterbury.
680-81	Ecumenical council at Constantinople rejects Monothelite heresy of one will in Christ.
<b>1054</b>	<b>Great Schism - Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic churches separate.</b>
1095	Pope Urban II authorises the first Crusade to recover the Holy Land from Moslems.
1099	Crusaders conquer Jerusalem.
1182	Massacre of Latin inhabitants of Constantinople.
1187	Jerusalem recaptured by a Moslem army led by Saladin.
1266-73	Thomas Aquinas writes his great work of systematic Theology: <i>Summa Theologiae</i> .
1453	Constantinople falls to the Ottoman Turks.
<b>1517</b>	<b>Martin Luther posts his 95 Theses in Wittenburg, Germany; beginning the Protestant reformation.</b>
1521	<i>Diet of Worms</i> - Luther's final breach with the Catholic church.
1525	William Tyndale completes his translation of the Bible into English.
1534	Act of Supremacy passed - Henry VIII becomes supreme head of the English church.
1545-63	Council of Trent - Roman Catholic counter reformation.
1854	Dogma of the Immaculate conception of Mary proclaimed by the Roman Catholic church.
1870-1	First Vatican council. Dogma of Papal infallibility proclaimed.
<b>20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century developments in Christianity</b>	
1906	Azusa street revival in Los Angeles. Beginnings of the Pentecostal movement.
1910	World mission conference held in Edinburgh.
1948	Formation of the World Council of Churches.
1950	Dogma of the Assumption of Mary proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church.
1962-5	Second Vatican council. Major reforms in the Roman Catholic church are initiated. Mutual anathemas of 1054 between Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches lifted.
1999	Signing of the <i>Joint Declaration on Justification</i> by the Lutheran and Roman Catholic Churches.
2005	Death of Pope John Paul II, who is succeeded by Pope Benedict XVI.
2006	World Methodist Council adopts the Lutheran/Catholic Joint Declaration on Justification.
2011	Beatification of Pope John Paul II.
2013	Resignation of Pope Benedict XVI, who is succeeded by Pope Francis.

### Task 3 – Timeline of 15 key events

There are many significant events detailed above.

We have identified 8 of the most significant events (in bold) . Research and briefly (about 100 words) explain each of them.

# WHAT



## **The Bible**

The Bible is not just one book, but an entire library, with stories, songs, poetry, letters and history, as well as literature that might more obviously qualify as 'religious'.

The Christian Bible has two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the original Hebrew Bible, the sacred scriptures of the Jewish faith, written at different times between about 1200 and 165 BC. The New Testament books were written by Christians in the first century AD.

## **Creeds**

A creed (also known as a confession, symbol, or statement of faith) is a statement of the shared beliefs of a religious community in the form of a fixed formula summarizing core tenets. The earliest creed in Christianity, "Jesus is Lord", originated in the writings of Saint Paul. One of the most widely used creeds in Christianity is the Nicene Creed, first formulated in AD 325 at the First Council of Nicaea. It was based on Christian understanding of the Canonical Gospels, the letters of the New Testament and to a lesser extent the Old Testament. Affirmation of this creed, which describes the Trinity, is generally taken as a fundamental test of orthodoxy for most Christian denominations. The Apostles' Creed is also broadly accepted. Some Christian denominations and other groups have rejected the authority of those creeds.

## **Teachings**

As a Church that is nearly 2000 years old, there is a vast collection of various teachings that to a greater or lesser extent are influential to modern Christians. Each of the major denominations will have their own method of communicating these teachings to their followers. It may be through sermons that have been written down, letters, exhortations, or official teachings sometimes known to Catholics as encyclicals. Most of the sessions of the Vatican II Council resulted in several major encyclicals. Catholics emphasise the importance of such teachings more than Protestant Christians who place less emphasis on the authority of Church leaders. However all will refer to teachings other than the Bible in their day to day faith. The Catholic Church has compiled all its major teachings into what it calls the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the CCC is a Catechism promulgated (issued) for the Catholic Church by Pope John Paul II in 1992. It sums up, in book form, the beliefs of the Catholic faithful. A catechism is a summary or exposition of doctrine and serves as a learning introduction to the Sacraments traditionally used in catechesis, or Christian religious teaching of children and adult converts.

## **Tradition**

Again in 2000 years of history many ideas are carried and expressed in other ways than the Bible. Tradition is the collective way of describing the customs, structures, teachings and beliefs that have been accepted and accumulated by Christians over time and in history. Catholics place a good deal of emphasis on tradition, so that it is seen as equal to the Bible, whereas Protestant Christians value tradition less and will always see the Bible as carrying full authority.

## **Beliefs or Dogmas**

There are a huge range of Christian beliefs, many of the core beliefs or dogmas are outlined in the Christian Creeds (see above). These are a list of the main Christian dogmas/beliefs:

### *Incarnation*

The incarnation of Christ is a central Christian doctrine that God became flesh, assumed a human nature, and became a man in the form of Jesus, the Son of God and the second person of the Trinity. This foundational Christian position holds that the divine nature of the Son of God was perfectly united with human nature in one divine Person, Jesus, making him both truly God and truly man. The theological term for this is hypostatic union.

### *The Atonement*

Atonement describes beliefs that human beings can be reconciled to God through Christ's sacrificial suffering and death. Atonement refers to the forgiving or pardoning of sin in general and original sin in particular through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus. Throughout the centuries, Christians have used different metaphors and given differing explanations of the atonement to express how the atonement might work. Churches and denominations may vary in which metaphor or explanation they consider most accurately fits into their theological perspective; however all Christians emphasize that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and through his death the sins of humanity have been forgiven.

### *Resurrection*

This is the central Christian belief that Jesus of Nazareth, having been crucified by the Romans and buried was raised body and soul from the dead three days later on the first Easter Day, appeared to his disciples for 40 days and then ascended to heaven after which the Holy Spirit was sent upon the early Christian believers. Christians also believe that they too will experience bodily resurrection at some point after death, though the timing of this and the nature of the 'resurrected body' is debated.

### *Trinity*

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity (Latin: Trinitas, lit. 'triad', from Latin: trinus "threefold") holds that God is one God, but three coeternal consubstantial persons or hypostases—the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit—as "one God in three Divine Persons". The three Persons are distinct, yet are one "substance, essence or nature".

### *Justification*

In Christian theology, justification is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time making a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice. The means of justification is an area of significant difference among Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism, with each group disagreeing about whether or not faith or belief is enough, or whether faith needs to be shown also by the kind of person you are and the ways you act as a Christian should. Justification is often seen as being the theological fault line that divided Catholic from the Lutheran and Reformed traditions of Protestantism during the Reformation.

## **Christian Worship**

In Christianity, worship is the act of attributing reverent honour and homage to God. In the New Testament, various words are used to refer to the term worship. One is *proskuneo* ("to worship") which means to bow down to God or kings. Throughout most of Christianity's history, corporate Christian worship has been liturgical, characterized by prayers and hymns, with texts rooted in, or closely related to, the Scripture, particularly the Psalter; this form of sacramental and ceremonial worship is still practiced by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican churches, as well as some Protestant denominations such as Lutheranism and Methodism. In Evangelicalism, worship is viewed like an act of adoration of God, with a more informal conception. The term liturgy is derived from the Greek *leitourgia* meaning "public service" and is formed by two words: "*laos*" (people) and "*ergon*" (work), literally "work of the people". Responsorial prayers are a series of petitions read or sung by a leader with responses made by the congregation. Set times for prayer during the day were established (based substantially on Jewish models), and a festal cycle throughout the Church year governed the celebration of Feasts and Seasons like Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter and holy days pertaining to the events in the life of Jesus, the lives of the saints, and aspects of the Godhead.

## **The Sacraments**

A sacrament is a Christian rite recognized as of particular importance and significance. The Church of England prayer book describes a sacrament as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'. There are various views on the existence and meaning of such rites. Many Christians consider the sacraments to be a visible symbol of the reality of God, as well as a means by which God enacts his grace. Many denominations, including the Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed, hold to the definition of sacrament formulated by Augustine of Hippo: an outward sign of an inward grace that has been instituted by Jesus Christ. Sacraments signify God's grace in a way that is outwardly observable to the participant.

The Catholic Church recognise seven sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation (Penance or Confession), Eucharist (or Holy Communion), Confirmation, Marriage (Matrimony), Holy Orders, and Anointing of the Sick.

The Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Church also believe that there are seven major sacraments, but apply the corresponding Greek word also to rites that in the Western tradition are called sacramentals and to other realities, such as the Church itself.

Many Protestant denominations, such as those within the Reformed tradition, identify two sacraments instituted by Christ, the Eucharist (or Holy Communion) and Baptism.

## **Prayer**

Prayer is an invocation or act that seeks to activate a rapport with God through deliberate communication. In the narrow sense, the term refers to an act of supplication or intercession directed towards God. More generally, prayer can also have the purpose of thanksgiving or praise, forms of meditation. Prayer can take a variety of forms: it can be part of a set liturgy or ritual, and it can be performed alone or in groups. Prayer may take the form of a hymn, incantation, formal creedal statement, or a spontaneous utterance in the praying person. Most Christians will pray using a very wide variety of forms and expressions, coloured by and given expression to by the culture, traditions etc. of their denomination.

## **Christian Ethics**

Christian ethics is a branch of Christian theology that defines virtuous behaviour and wrong behaviour from a Christian perspective. Systematic theological study of Christian ethics is called moral theology. Christian virtues are often divided into four cardinal virtues and three theological virtues. Christian ethics includes questions regarding how the rich should act toward the poor, how women are to be treated, and the morality of war. Christian ethicists, like other ethicists, approach ethics from different frameworks and perspectives. The approach of virtue ethics has also become popular in recent decades. In our Ethics course, but also in the Theology component you will be

introduced to a wide range of ethical ideas and frameworks and some of these will be explicitly Christian in their origins and application.

### **Actions (Works)**

There is a debate about how Christians should show that they believe other than praying, worshipping, believing etc. However few Christians will claim that their actions are unimportant and many will see it as essential to follow the teachings of Jesus by caring for the sick, elderly, suffering etc. and working to alleviate poverty, homelessness etc. and fight in a peaceful way against oppression and injustice. Christianity has and continues to be at the forefront in bringing education and healthcare, particularly to regions that lack these. Some would argue that Christian principles are at the heart of modern democratic principles e.g. the founding of the British Labour Party, and have shaped movements such as the Abolition of Slavery and the current fight against the trafficking of people (modern day slavery).

#### **Task 4 – 10 question quiz on key beliefs**

Read the information above.

Create a 10 question quiz *with answers* that you could use to test the knowledge of your fellow students in September.

e.g. What is a creed?





If you are interested in any of the areas you have read about in this brief introduction you could carry out your own research to learn more.



## REP – Something to watch, to listen to and to read.

The following tasks are not compulsory, however, we strongly recommend that you complete them as they will help you develop your knowledge and understanding of the many topics covered during the Religion, Ethics and Philosophy A Level course.

Choose a minimum of one listen task, one watch task and one read task, write a one paragraph summary and/or review of it that we can discuss in September.

	<p><b>The Panpsycast</b> Aimed at A Level RS and Philosophy students. Thought-provoking and witty. Useful episodes include, 1, 2, 32 or 42 or any that you find interesting!</p>	<p><b>Philosophy Bites, Ethics Bites and Philosophy the Classics podcasts</b> Brilliant introductions to key texts and ideas in philosophy and ethics <a href="#">Trolleys-killing-and-the-doctrine-double-effect?</a></p>	<p>Crash course philosophy <a href="#">Christianity from Judaism to Constantine</a> <a href="#">What is God like?</a> <a href="#">What is philosophy?</a> There are lots of other interesting introductions to key issues</p>	<p><b>History of Philosophy without any gaps</b> This is a podcast that tells the story of philosophy but without the focus on the Western tradition. <a href="#">Introduction to the ideas of Aquinas</a></p>
	<p><b>The Good Place</b> Comedy on Netflix exploring the afterlife and ethics (it is very funny!) Some clip are available on YouTube.</p> 	<p><b>Religion for Breakfast</b> YouTube series of short, 6 minute videos on a huge range of religious topics and movements.</p>	<p><b>The Story of God with Morgan Freeman</b> documentary series on the development and impact of religion in human history. Only available on National Geographic. Some clip are available on YouTube.</p>	<p><b>The Root of all Evil? 2-part</b> documentary series from Richard Dawkins that outlines the main arguments of the New Atheists regarding the dangers of religion</p>
	<p><b><a href="#">Article on Jurgen Moltmann</a></b> An influential theologian looks back on his life and ideas.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Challenging Learning Journal - articles</a></b> Journals aimed at A levels students e.g. <a href="#">Autumn 2020</a> has articles on Jesus, faith in a pandemic and religion and science.</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Challenging learning - atonement and feminist theology articles</a></b> Specific articles on relevant topics</p>	<p><b><a href="#">Current and archived news articles on religion</a></b>  <a href="#">BBC ethics</a>  Keep up to date with religion in the news.</p>