

CHRISTIANITY



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Ash Wednesday is the beginning of Lent, a time when Christians fast. Most Christians are marked with a cross of ash on their foreheads this day.

Holy Thursday is when the oils used in many Christian sacraments are blessed. It is also a day when Christians remember Jesus last meal with his disciples and the instruction to celebrate the Eucharist.

Good Friday is a fast day and recalls the day that Jesus was crucified and died.

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Pentecost marks the day when the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit and celebrates the beginning of the Christian Church.

Visiting a Christian Church

You are expected to be reverent and respectful of others.

You have to be quiet and it is not acceptable to eat and No food should be brought in You are welcome to take part in the ceremony as appropriate. In Catholic churches a gentle bow is made towards the Tabernacle, the place where the Eucharist, is reserved.

For more details,

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About Christianity

Christians believe in One God. This God has three persons (The Trinity) named the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Christianity is focused on the life and ministry (work) of Jesus Christ. The life and teaching of Jesus Christ are told in the sacred book called the Bible. Christians believe that the story and message of the Hebrew scriptures (Old Testament) fore-tell and lead up to the incarnation of Jesus in the world.

Christians believe that God created the world so that we might live in relationship with God and with all creation. Over time humanity lost sight of this through our human frailty and sinfulness. God gifted humanity with Jesus, God the Son, to restore us to right relationship with him.

Through his life and teaching Jesus showed people how they ought to live. He summed this up as 'Loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength' and 'Loving your neighbour as yourself'. Jesus did this perfectly and demonstrated the extent of his love and conviction about his message so strongly that it led to his crucifixion. Christians believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and that those who live in unity with Christ's message will share this same reward, eternal life with God. After his ascent in to heaven humanity received the gift of the Spirit of God which enables them to live as God desires and to follow Jesus Christ.

Place and style of worship

While Christians spend time praying individually they usually gather together once a week on a Sunday in churches. Worship at church on Sunday is called Eucharist and involves prayer, singing, and reading of the Bible, along with an explanation of the Bible passages, and the changing of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. This is done by a priest/ordained minister. This Holy Communion is than shared among those gathered.

Religious Text

The primary source for Christian faith and practice is the Bible. It contains information and stories about the Hebrew people, the coming of Christ and the early church. The majority of Christians recognise the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as expressing their key beliefs.

The types of Christian Communities

Christian churches can be grouped in to four main groupings, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant and Evangelical.

Catholics

God reveals himself in the world in which Christians live
Reverence for Mary, the mother of Jesus is part of the Catholic teaching and gathering for weekly Mass is very important. Community is a central value for Catholics. Having a sense of connection with all the faithful who have died and the Saints. Having a deep respect for Scripture and the canon of the Catholic Church. The Pope is elected by the Cardinals to be a pastoral and spiritual leader.

Orthodox

There are Eastern Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches. There are many similarities with the Roman Catholic Church. Three of the Seven sacraments are given in infancy. The head of the Church is the Patriarch. The Churches are widely adorned with Icons and incense is used at every service.

Protestant

There are many Protestant Churches now but the Protestant Church arose during the 16th century Reformation. Most have only two sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion. Men and Women can be priests. Protestants believe that salvation comes only by God's grace, through faith in Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Evangelical Churches

Follow the teaching of Jesus Christ. They do not have a hierarchical structure like other Christian Churches. They believe that the fall of human beings has resulted in the sinfulness of all humanity so God's wrath is levelled against humanity. Believe in the absolute authority of the scriptures regarding all aspects of life. Through God's grace alone can sinners be saved.

Significant Feasts and Celebrations

The Orthodox Church follows a different calendar to other Christian Churches but celebrates the same feasts.

Christmas Day celebrates the birth of Jesus among humanity and is celebrated by most Christians on the 25th of December.