

LITERACY LIFELINE - Christian practices

Word/phrase	Meaning
Baptism	The sacrament through which people become members of the Church using water as a symbol of washing away sin. It is an initiation rite.
Believers' Baptism	Initiation into the Church, by immersion in water, of people old enough to understand the ceremony/rite and willing to live a Christian life.
Christmas	The Feast Day commemorating the birth of Jesus (25 December in most Churches).
Easter	The religious season celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It starts on Easter Day and finishes with the feast of Pentecost.
Eucharist	Literally 'thanksgiving'. Another name for Holy Communion and a service in which the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated, using bread and wine which many Christians refer to as the body and blood of Christ.
Evangelism	Preaching the gospel (the good news about God) to convert people to the Christian faith.
Food banks	This relates to Christian charities collecting donated food to distribute to the poor in Britain.
Holy Communion	Another name for the Eucharist in which the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated using bread and wine.
Infant baptism	Initiation of babies and young children into the Church, where promises are taken on their behalf by adults.
Informal prayer	This takes the form of extempore prayer, consisting of spontaneous prayers spoken from the heart as opposed to the use of set prayers.
Informal worship	Worship which has no set structure It is usually spontaneous and sometimes charismatic in nature.
Iona	An island of the west coast of Scotland founded by Columba in the 4th century. It is used by Christians today as a centre for pilgrimage and religious retreat.
Liturgical worship	A church service which follows a set structure or ritual.
Lourdes	A town in France, where the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette in a series of visions, and now a place of pilgrimage, where it is claimed that miraculous healings have taken place.
The Lord's Prayer	The prayer taught to the disciples by Jesus; also known as the 'Our Father'.
Mission	Literally 'sent out'. It refers to the duty of Christians to spread the gospel (the good news about Jesus).
Non-liturgical worship	A service which does not follow a set text or ritual. This type of worship is sometimes spontaneous or charismatic in nature.
Persecution	Throughout the centuries and still in some parts of the world, Christians face punishment and even death for sticking to their faith.
Pilgrimage	A journey by a Christian to a holy site, eg Lourdes, Iona. Pilgrimage is itself an act of worship and devotion.
Prayer	Communicating with God through words of praise, thanksgiving or confession, or requests for his help or guidance. Listening to and speaking to God.
Private worship	A believer giving God praise and worship on his or her own.
Reconciliation	The process of restoring harmony after relationships between people has broken down AND a sacrament in the Roman Catholic and some Anglican Churches.
Sacrament	The outward and visible sign of an invisible and spiritual grace. Baptism and the Eucharist are recognised as sacraments by most Christians.
Set Prayer	These are prayers written throughout the centuries by Christian holy men and women, which many Christians use. The Lord's Prayer is an example of a set prayer.
Street Pastors	A Christian organisation consisting of people who work mainly at night on city streets, caring for those who need help.
Worship	Offering to God the praise that he is due. This may be done in public or in private worship.

Christian practices

Why do Christians worship?

- They want to show God how much they love him
- They want to thank God for what he has done for them
- It is a way of spending time with God

What happens in Christian worship? It depends - there are lots of different styles of worship, but it often includes some of the following:

- Praying
- Singing hymns
- Bible readings
- A speech (called a sermon or homily) by a priest
- Giving an offering
- Exchanging a sign of peace
- Eucharist or Holy Communion

Public or private worship?

Public	Private
Usually in a church. Often follows a pattern or order. A way of feeling part of the wider Christian community and showing your faith. Jesus said, 'Wherever two or three gather in my name, there I am with them'.	On your own. Can be personalised. Includes things like praying and reading the Bible. Can happen whenever you want/need. Jesus said, 'Your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.'

Formal worship - Liturgical or non-liturgical?

Liturgical	Non-liturgical
Follows a set pattern or order including prayer, singing hymns and Bible readings. e.g. Church of England, Roman Catholic churches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Predictable - you know what to expect and feel at home in any church service ✗ Inflexible - you have to follow the order so you can't change things to suit a particular event or time. 	No set pattern. Often similar, but can be adapted to suit different occasions. Often focuses more on Bible readings. e.g. Methodist, Baptist churches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ More adaptable to suit special occasions ✗ Less predictable - worshippers might not know exactly what to expect.

Informal worship - No set pattern at all.

e.g. Quakers worship in silence and wait to be inspired to speak out by the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal churches are inspired to sing, dance and call out by the Holy Spirit.

- ✓ Close connection to the Holy Spirit and personal connection with God
- ✗ Worshippers may not know what to expect.

Why do Christians pray?

- To praise God
- To say sorry and ask for forgiveness
- To ask for help for themselves or others
- To thank God



They also listen! Christians believe God speaks to them through prayer too!



Set prayers or informal prayers?

The Lord's prayer is an example of a set prayer. Jesus told his followers to use these words when they pray. It begins with the words 'Our Father' and both praises God and asks for his help.

Set prayers	Informal prayers
Have been written down and are used over and over again with the same words. Used in all forms of worship. Comforting to say familiar words over and over.	Are made up on the spot (extempore). Mainly used in informal and private worship. More personal and from the heart.

What did Jesus say about prayer?



He said	He meant
Your Father knows what you need before you ask him	God already knows what you need before you pray.
Ask and it will be given to you	God will give you what you ask for in prayer.

Should God answer every prayer?	
Yes because	No because
He is supposed to be omnibenevolent and omnipotent. If he loves us he should use his power to answer our prayers. Jesus said 'Ask and it will be given to you'. People lose trust and faith in God if their prayers are not answered.	Some prayers are unnecessary or unimportant or could be for selfish or bad things. We would be too reliant on God and stop trying to do things for ourselves. God may know that it is not good for us to have some particular prayers answered.

Is prayer pointless?	
Yes because	No because
Jesus said God already knows what we want before we pray, so why bother? Many prayers go unanswered, so it's a waste of time If God does not exist, then no one is listening.	It makes a connection with God and brings us closer to him. Some prayers are answered. It allows us to praise and thank God as well as bring our worries and needs to him.

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Sacraments are special events or ceremonies which Christians believe bring them very close to God. They are an outward sign of an inward grace. Sacraments have three elements: The **form** and the **matter** are the outward signs and the **intention** is the inward grace.

The Form - the ritual itself - what do they actually say and do?

The Matter - the objects used in the sacrament

The Intention - the reason for doing it.

Not all churches recognise the same sacraments, but most agree that Baptism and Eucharist are important.

Baptism

In **Infant Baptism**, a child is welcomed into the Church when its parents and **godparents** make **promises** to bring it up as a Christian. The **priest** sprinkles **water** from a **font** onto the child's head and marks it with a **cross** in **holy oil**. A **candle** is presented, lit from the **Paschal candle**. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church practise infant baptism.



The sprinkling with water symbolises washing away sins and the holy oil shows the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In **Believers' Baptism**, the candidate makes their **own commitment** to the Christian faith. They give a **testimony** to explain why they are a Christian before they are **fully immersed** in water in a **baptistry pool**. The Baptist Church practises Believers' Baptism.



Being ducked under the water and then brought out again is a symbol of dying to their old life and being born in a new life as a Christian.

Sacraments

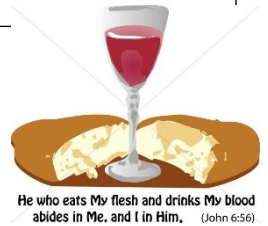
Is infant baptism or believers' baptism best?	
Infant is best	Believers' is best
The parents and godparents are committed to bring the child up as a Christian from the outset. The child becomes part of the Christian community from the start of its life.	It is more meaningful when the candidate knows what they are committing to and chooses it for themselves. It is more like Jesus' own baptism in the River Jordan.

Can you be a good Christian without being baptised?	
Yes	No
If you believe in Jesus then you are a Christian. You don't need a ceremony to prove it. If you follow the teachings of the Bible and are a good person, that is what matters most.	Baptism washes away Original Sin which separates us from God. Baptism is the start of your life as a Christian. It shows a commitment to believing in Jesus.

Eucharist (aka Holy Communion, Lord's Supper, Breaking the Bread, Mass)

This is an important part of formal worship in many churches. Christians share bread and wine which has been blessed by a priest or minister in memory of the Last Supper when Jesus told his disciples to do it in memory of the sacrifice of his body and blood which he made for them on the cross.

Some churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England celebrate Holy Communion very often - at least once a week and maybe even daily. Others like the Methodist church might celebrate it just once a month or even less often. They think that hearing God's word in the Bible is more important.



He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in Him. (John 6:56)

Roman Catholics believe in **transubstantiation** - when the priest blesses the bread and wine Jesus becomes present in it. Other Christians believe the bread and wine are a symbol of Jesus' body and blood.



In Church of England and Roman Catholic churches, the worshippers share a cup of wine. However, in the Methodist church, worshippers drink grape juice as Methodists do not drink alcohol. It is served in individual cups because the alcohol in the wine that helps to kill germs when the cup is shared is not present in the grape juice!



In the Roman Catholic Church, only baptised Catholics can receive Holy Communion since it needs a level of commitment to the faith to take part. In other churches, like the Methodist Church, all are welcome since they would not turn anyone away from a chance to be close to God.

Why do Christians like to receive Holy Communion?

- ✓ Jesus told them to do it, so they are following his teaching
- ✓ It reminds them of Jesus' sacrifice for them, which is very important
- ✓ It is a chance to share an important ceremony with other Christians and feel part of a community.

Festivals – Christmas and Easter

Christmas is when Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. This is connected to the important Christian belief of **incarnation**. It is the moment when God became fully human.



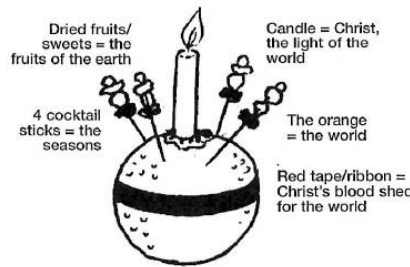
When? December 25th or January 6th

What?

- Perform Nativity plays to remember the story
- Attend church services to worship and thank God for the gift of Jesus to the world, e.g. Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve.
- Sing carols to celebrate Jesus' birth
- Give gifts as a reminder of God's gift to the world in becoming human and of the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus.



At a Christingle service, Christians think about Jesus coming as the 'Light of the World'.



Easter is when Christians celebrate the **resurrection** of Jesus after his crucifixion.

The week leading up to Easter Sunday is called **Holy Week** and Christians remember events in the last week of Jesus' life, such as when crowds cheered him and waved palm leaves when he arrived in Jerusalem on **Palm Sunday** and the time when he shared his last meal with the disciples and introduced the idea of Holy Communion, known as the **Last Supper**.

Jesus' crucifixion is remembered on Good Friday. Christians believe that Jesus suffered and died on the cross to pay the price for their sins, so they can have a chance to be saved and go to Heaven.

Some Christians will take part in a service called the Stations of the Cross, when they remember the events of the day of the crucifixion. Many Christians will not eat meat on Good Friday. They are making a small sacrifice to remember Jesus' sacrifice for them on the cross.

On the Saturday, some Christians attend a service called the Easter Vigil, when they pray and read from the Bible as they wait for the day of the resurrection.

Easter Sunday is a day of great celebration as Christians remember the resurrection. Church services contain the words 'Christ is risen! Alleluia!' The resurrection shows that God triumphed over death and all Christians can hope for life after death.

Traditionally, eggs are given. They represent the idea of new life.



Which is more important - Christmas or Easter?

Christmas	Easter
It is the moment when God came into the world as Jesus. Without it, we would not have Jesus' teaching and example to follow and the crucifixion and resurrection could not have happened.	Without the crucifixion, we could not be saved and go to Heaven. The resurrection is proof that God can triumph over evil and gives us all hope.

Lourdes, France



A vision of the Virgin Mary appeared to a peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous. A spring of water appeared which seems to have the ability to heal people.

Millions of people travel to Lourdes every year in the hope of a cure for an illness or injury. 69 cures have happened that cannot be explained in any way except to say they are a miracle.

While they are there, pilgrims will They take part in processions, light candles, pray, take part in church services, visit the cave or grotto where the visions happened and bathe in or drink the water from the spring. Many pilgrims bring home a bottle of the water when they leave.

A pilgrimage is a journey made for religious reasons to a place that has an important religious connection.

Iona, Scotland

This is the site of the first Christian community in Scotland, started by St Columba in 563. Christianity spread from there across other parts of Britain. Although the early community there ended when the Vikings invaded, there has been a monastery there for hundreds of years.

Christians who visit Iona will spend a few days on the island visiting the special places, attending church services, praying and meditating quietly and sharing in the day to day tasks of running the community, such as cooking meals and cleaning up.



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Is pilgrimage the best way to show your faith?

Yes	No
<p>Pope Francis said that pilgrimage is "the most eloquent expression of the faith of God's people"</p> <p>It shows your commitment as you make the effort to go there</p> <p>It takes you away from your ordinary, everyday life, so you can focus just on God</p> <p>It brings you together with other Christians so you feel connected to the wider community.</p> <p>It is a public display of your faith.</p>	<p>It is expensive - the money could be spent on other things like helping the poor.</p> <p>Doing good deeds is the most important way to show your faith because you are following the example and teaching of Jesus.</p> <p>Pilgrimages are once in a lifetime events. The best way to show your faith is to live it every day by worshipping God and doing good deeds. God is everywhere - you don't have to go to a special place to be close to him.</p> <p>Sacraments like Holy Communion can bring you close to God.</p>

The work of the church in the local community

Street Pastors

A group of Christians from different local churches who go out on the streets of town centres at night and help people who get into difficulties on a night out.
e.g.

look after people who are very drunk or sick

help people who are stranded without money or phone

give flipflops to women whose feet are hurting in high heels



Why do they do it?

In the **Parable of the Good Samaritan**, Jesus tells his followers that they must be like the Samaritan and help strangers in need.

In the **Parable of the Sheep and Goats**, Jesus said that those who feed the hungry will go to Heaven because it is as if they were helping God.

Jesus said we must **love our neighbour as ourselves** - it is loving to help those in need, whoever they are.

Food banks are sometimes supported or run by local churches. Food is collected and sorted by volunteers who then give it out to people in need.

This is an important service to families and individuals who might otherwise not have food on the table.



The work of the church with those in need in the wider world

Christian Aid
We believe in life before death

Examples

Emergency aid for victims of floods earthquakes and famines.

Helps provide services like education and healthcare

Campaigns for justice for the poor including a fair sharing of wealth and human rights.

Campaigns against things that are harmful to the poor, like government corruption and climate change.

Their website says: As a Christian organisation, we believe every one of us is created in the image of God and deserves respect and care, and the opportunity to live a life of peace, dignity and worth.

In a world with such wealth as ours, no one should go without food, shelter, security or any of the other basics we all need.

We work for and with people of all faiths and none, as well as with churches and other organisations, to **promote sustainable development, strive for social justice and pursue our vision of a world without poverty.**

Why do they do it?	
We are all created in God's image	So everyone deserves the opportunity to live a good life
The Parable of the Good Samaritan	We must help those in need even if we don't know them
The Parable of the Sheep and Goats	We will go to Heaven if we help those in need
Love your neighbour as yourself	It is not loving to leave people in desperate situations when you could do something to help.

Mission, evangelism and church growth

This is all about how Christians spread the teachings of the church around the world. They believe they should do this because

- They think the world would be a better place if everyone followed Christian teachings like 'love your neighbour as yourself'
- They believe that the only way to Heaven is through believing in Jesus, so if more people become Christians then more people can get into Heaven.
- They feel that being a Christian has made their lives better and they want to share that with other people.
- Jesus told them to in the *Great Commission!*

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me



Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

The Christian church is growing in Africa, but declining in Europe.

Mission and evangelism at home - Spring Harvest

This organisation arranges residential meetings for different groups of people in holiday camps. Individuals and families can go, as well as school and church groups. There are different themes for different groups but all will include some fun activities, some Bible teachings and prayer and plenty of chances to share and develop your faith.

Mission and evangelism abroad

This organisation helps people to travel abroad to work to help people in need and to spread the Christian message. For example, they might work as a teacher or medical worker to help improve a local community, and while they are there, they will also preach about Christianity.



Church growth in the UK. Fresh Expressions of Church is the idea that churches need to be more diverse in order to appeal to modern people. Small churches are 'planted' or started up with a particular focus. For example, The Tubestation is a church with links to the surfing community in Polzeath, Cornwall.



"Helping those in need abroad is the most important part of Christian mission"

Agree	Disagree
<p>Jesus told us to help those in need in the Parable of the Sheep and Goats and Good Samaritan.</p> <p>People in need in the UK get support from the benefits system - in other countries people are left to cope on their own.</p>	<p>It is more important to teach about Christianity because Jesus said you can't get to Heaven unless you believe in him.</p> <p>If you get more people to be Christians, there will be more people to help those in need in the future.</p>

How do Christians respond to persecution?

Love your enemies and pray for those who hate you

Forgive 70 x 7



Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you for believing in me...Great is your reward in Heaven

Persecution means being deliberately and repeatedly being treated badly and hatefully because of prejudice

Christians try to respond with love and forgiveness when they are persecuted, but they also are determined to carry on their faith and help others who are being persecuted.

For I, the Lord, love justice



Open Doors

Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

- Trains people as counsellors to help victims of persecution
- Raises money to support the work of those helping victims of persecution
- Helps victims of persecution to rebuild their lives through employment, education and safe homes.
- Campaigns on behalf of persecuted people
- Supports persecuted Christians with prayer, sending them Bibles and media broadcasts

Reconciliation means bringing people back together on good terms again

Why and how do Christians support reconciliation?

Why? Jesus said. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' and reconciliation brings about peace. He also said 'love your neighbour as yourself' and reconciliation helps people to be more loving to each other.

CASE STUDY - CORRYMEELA

Corrymeela began in 1965 as a way of bringing together different groups in Northern Ireland, who had been involved in hatred, prejudice and discrimination between Unionist and Nationalist groups. It is a centre where people are helped to work through their differences and problems and learn how to live peacefully alongside each other. The centre runs an education programme that teaches schoolchildren about positive citizenship values and advises other groups on reconciliation.

