

Who is God?

You must be able to:

- Explore the nature of God
- Investigate the origins of the Trinity in the Bible.

Key Scripture and Religious Teaching

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commands the apostles: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

The Trinity in the Bible

- The word **Trinity** does not occur in the Bible.
- The Bible teaches that there is one God.
- Old Testament, Deuteronomy 6:4, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one'.
- While writing about idols in the New Testament, St Paul says: '... we know that "An idol is nothing at all in the world" and that "There is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4).
- God is infinitely greater than we are and beyond our understanding.
- God can be described as being omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, omnibenevolent and eternal (see page 39).
- Christian scripture teaches that the Father is God, that Jesus is God and that the Holy Spirit is God.
- He is one God existing in three 'persons'.
- He is the triune God: three coexistent, coeternal 'persons' who make up one God.
- The relationship between the 'persons' of the Trinity is a mystery.
- In John 14:16-17, Jesus says: 'And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate [counsellor] to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth.'
- Jesus the **Christ**, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit are known as the Trinity.
- God reveals Himself in three expressions: the Creator of all things, the Saviour and the Life-Giving Spirit.
- The individual 'persons' of the Trinity have different tasks.

The Father

- The Father is the ultimate origin of the universe.
- He and the Word created all things.



Key Point

The Bible teaches that there is one God.

- He is the universe's **source** and cause: Genesis 1:1, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'.
- In 1 Corinthians 8:6, St Paul writes: '... yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live'.

The Son

- The Son is involved in the creation and maintenance of the universe: 1 Corinthians 8:6, '... and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live'.
- John 1:1, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'. Here the term 'Word' is a title given to Jesus.
- Christians believe that Jesus perfectly revealed the Father: John 14:7, 'if you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him'.
- The Son's work is in salvation: Matthew 1:21, 'She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins'.
- The Father works through the Son, who functions as His agent.

The Holy Spirit

- The Spirit was involved in the creation and maintenance of the universe: Genesis 1:2, 'Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters'.
- He is the agent of divine revelation: Ephesians 3:5, '... it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets'.
- He sanctifies: 1 Peter 1:2, '... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood'.
- He enabled the work of Jesus: Acts 10:38, '... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him'.
- The Father works by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Quick Test

1. What does the word 'Trinity' mean?
2. Who are the three 'persons' in the Trinity?
3. What is the Father's role in the Trinity?
4. What is the main work of the Son?
5. What does the Spirit do?



Key Point

Scripture teaches that the Father is God, that Jesus is God and that the Holy Spirit is God.

Key Words

Trinity
coexistent
Christ
revelation
sanctify

Practice Questions

Who is God?

1 What does the term 'Trinity' mean in Christianity?

[2]

2 What does Genesis chapter 1 reveal about God the Father?

[2]

3 Give three of the names given to God the Son.

[2]

4 On what key scriptures do Christians base their beliefs around the Trinity?

[4]

5 How does the Trinity help Christians to understand the true nature of God?

[5]

Total Marks

/ 15

What Makes Jesus Special?

You must be able to:

- Understand Jesus as the Word of God made flesh
- Examine the purpose of His mortal life and His example
- Explore His last days (The Passion), the Resurrection and the Ascension.

Key Scripture and Religious Teaching

John 1:1, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'

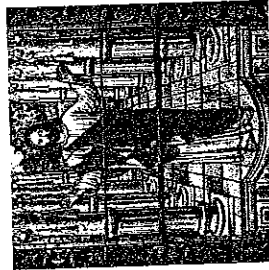
John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.'

Jesus, the Word

- John 1:1 refers to Jesus as 'the Word' and verse 14 says He 'became flesh':
 - The Greek for 'the Word' is 'logos', and this was used to denote the creative force, as well as logic and reason.
 - In the Old Testament, 'the Word of God' often referred to the way in which God communicated with His people.
 - John combines these two concepts in relation to Jesus.
- Matthew and Luke record His miraculous birth to a virgin, Mary.
- Joseph intended to finish their relationship but Matthew's Gospel tells us that he was dissuaded in a dream.
- The Magi (Wise Men) followed a star to Bethlehem, while angels told a group of shepherds about Jesus' birth.
- King Herod tried to have the baby Jesus killed but the family escaped to Egypt.
- Little is known of His early life as the son of a carpenter apart from a visit to Jerusalem when He was 12.

His Mortal Life and Example

- Jesus' public ministry began when he was about 30.
- He was baptised, by full immersion, in the River Jordan by his cousin John.
- He spent 40 days and 40 nights in the desert being tempted.
- He called 12 disciples to follow and learn from Him. There were fishermen, a tax-collector, even a Zealot.
- All four Gospels have records of Jesus' teaching (e.g. the Sermon on the Mount, parables, the 'I am' sayings, etc.).
- His miracles fall into three main categories: healing miracles and exorcisms, nature miracles and resurrections.
- He taught His followers about the Kingdom of God and the nature of His Messiahship, and Christians try to live in accordance with His teaching and example.



Key Point

A variety of unusual events, including stars, angels, shepherds and wise men, accompanied Jesus' birth.



Jesus' Last Days

- After about three years of ministry, Jesus and His disciples went to Jerusalem for Passover.
- He entered the city on a donkey and was popularly welcomed.
- He cleansed the Temple (His Father's House).
- The last days were spent teaching in the Temple Courts and healing.
- The religious authorities plotted to have Him arrested and tried and, following a Roman trial, put to death under the authority of Pontius Pilate.
- Jesus and the disciples ate their last supper together.
- The bread and wine are recalled in the Eucharist.
- They went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane.
- Judas betrayed Jesus to the authorities with a kiss.
- After several illegal trials, Jesus was sentenced to death.
- He was crucified on what became known as Good Friday.
- Christians believe that Jesus died so that sins could be forgiven.
- His body was placed in a tomb and a stone rolled in front of it.

The Resurrection and the Ascension

- The following Sunday morning His body was gone.
- Peter and some of the women examined the empty tomb, but only the grave clothes remained.
- The authorities claimed that the disciples stole the body.
- The Gospels record many accounts of people who claimed to have met with Jesus after the resurrection.
- Christians call this Sunday, Easter Day.
- After the resurrection, Jesus remained on Earth, teaching the disciples, for 40 days.
- Jesus led them to the vicinity of Bethany (Mount of Olives) where He ascended into heaven (called the ascension).
- Two men in white told the disciples Jesus would come again.

Redemption

- The word 'redemption' means to 'buy back' or 'reclaim'.
- When a slave was bought out of slavery, they were 'redeemed'.
- When Jesus died on the cross, Christians believe that His death purchased believers from slavery to sin and its consequences.
- His death pays the price of a ransom, freeing believers from bondage to sin and death and releasing them to freedom and new life.
- Paul sums this up when writing to Christians in Ephesus (Ephesians 1:7-8).

Quick Test

1. Explain what 'logos' means to Greeks and Jews.
2. Why was Jesus' birth special?
3. What happened to Jesus after his baptism?
4. What are the three main types of miracle?
5. What happened at the resurrection?

Key Point

Christians believe that Jesus' crucifixion made it possible for those who repent of their sins to be forgiven.



Key Point

The resurrection is central to the Christian faith.

Key Words

logos
disciple
Zealot
parable
Passover
Eucharist
resurrection
ascension
redemption

What Makes Jesus Special?

1 What set Jesus' birth apart from the birth of others? [2]

2 Who were the first people to hear of Jesus' birth? [2]

3 Briefly describe the key events just prior to the beginning of Jesus' three years of ministry. [2]

4 Explain how Jesus' death can be described as an act of redemption. [4]

5 What do you think is the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection for the Christian faith? [5]

Total Marks _____ / 15

How Can God Allow Evil?

You must be able to:

- Explain the problem of evil and suffering and how the problem may lead some people to reject belief in God or to question their faith
- Understand biblical teaching on suffering and the practical applications of Psalms, Job, prayer and charity.

Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

Key Scripture and Religious Teaching

Genesis 2:16-17, 'And the Lord 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."

Job 1:8, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.'

What is Theodicy?

- How can an all-loving God exist when we see so much suffering around us every day?
- Every day the news features suffering from around the world.
- Famine, disease, war and acts of violence all bring suffering to individuals and communities.
- An omnibenevolent God brings good to the world and not evil, yet with suffering in the world we have 'the problem of evil'.
- This is theodicy.
- The Greek philosopher Epicurus simplified the existence of suffering in the world:
 - If an all-powerful and perfectly good God exists, then evil does not;
 - There is evil in the world;
 - So, an all-powerful and perfectly good God does not exist.

The 'Fall of Man'

- In Genesis 2, Adam and Eve live in the perfect Garden of Eden but are tempted and eat fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- This is against the will of God and they commit the first recorded sin in the Bible.
- The eating of the fruit shows Adam and Eve's free will as they chose to disobey the will of God.
- Disobeying God and sinning is known as the 'fall of man' - a separation from God, which meant that man had brought suffering upon himself.

Key Point

All of humanity experiences evil in some shape or form, which raises questions about the existence of an all-loving God.



- God then punishes Adam and Eve by burdening Eve with pain during childbirth and Adam with the difficulty of farming barren land outside of the Garden of Eden.
- Another consequence of the fall is that death will enter the world and humans will no longer live forever.
- Christians believe that God does not cause the suffering that we see, but through our 'free will' we cause it ourselves.

The Book of Job

- Believed to be the first biblical book written, Job tells of Satan challenging God over the faithfulness of a man called Job.
- Satan argues that Job follows God because he has been blessed with a good life.
- God allows Satan to test Job and throughout the book Satan fills Job's life with despair and tragedy.
- However, despite this, Job continues to worship God, who then restores Job's life to fullness.
- Jews and Christians both argue that this shows that God is not the cause of suffering but is able to remove it when it is part of his sovereign plan.

Role of Free Will in Religion

- A Muslim believes that all good comes from Allah, life on Earth is a test, and suffering in life is rewarded in the afterlife.
- Therefore, anyone who does not follow the will of Allah will face negative consequences when their life ends.
- Muslims also believe in the principle of free will.
- Muslims believe they were created with the wisdom to judge right from wrong and to make their own decisions. Many Muslims do, however, believe that Allah can intervene in their lives at any moment.
- Muslims believe that bad deeds lead people to learn not to repeat mistakes, as Allah allows people to make mistakes so that they can learn the right way and follow His teachings.
- Sikhs believe that humans suffer in this life as they either deny the existence of God, or act selfishly, not thinking of others.
- This suffering can be overcome by human effort, self-reflection, and divine grace (Gurprasad) through the Guru's teachings.
- Sikhs believe that evil itself or any demonic life forms do not exist.
- Instead they believe that only failings of the human spirit or conscience lead to actions that cause suffering to others.

Quick Test

1. How did Adam and Eve sin?
2. Why does God not stop us from sinning?
3. Why do people suffer according to Sikhs?

Key Point

If God were to stop suffering from happening, it would deny humanity its free will.

Key Words

suffering
omnibenevolent
theodicy
free will
fall of man

Practice Questions

How Can God Allow Evil?

1 What does the word 'theodicy' mean? [2]

2 How is the book of Job helpful for Christians who are struggling with the suffering in the world? [2]

3 What is 'free will'? [2]

4 Define the Sikh view of suffering and how it can be overcome. [4]

5 Explain how humankind lost its original relationship with God. [5]

Total Marks _____ / 15

How Do They Live Their Lives?

Beliefs, Teachings and Practices

You must be able to:

- Consider the effect of faith on a Christian's life
- Explore how faith affects a Muslim's way of life
- Investigate the relevance of faith for Jewish living
- Consider the effect of faith on a Sikh's life.

Christianity

- Some Christians will wear a cross or crucifix to remind them of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Christians may spend time each day reading the Bible and praying.
- Rosary beads (right) are used by Catholics to help with prayer.
- Christians may meet together in small groups for fellowship.
- Christians are important for Christians with birth (baptism/dedication), adolescence (confirmation/adult baptism), marriage (wedding) and death (funeral) being marked with special services.
- Evangelical Christians actively try to persuade others to become Christians.
- Some Christians study for years to become priests, vicars or ministers.
- Nuns and monks are Christians who have withdrawn from everyday life to concentrate on prayer or serving the poor.
- Lots of Christians regularly spend their free time practically serving the poor and homeless.

Islam

- A Muslim's daily life is governed by the Five Pillars:
 - The Shahadah is the profession of faith: 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His prophet (messenger)'. When a Muslim recites this, they personally accept it as true and that they will obey all the commitments of Islam in their life. It is the first of the Five Pillars of Islam.
 - Salah is the ritual prayers that are offered five times a day in response to the call to prayer by the muezzin.
 - Zakah is the systematic collection of 2.5% of a Muslim's wealth, which is given to the poor.
 - Sawm is when Muslims are required to fast during daylight hours throughout the month of Ramadan. It ends with the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr.
 - Hajj: at least once in their lives, Muslims are expected to go on pilgrimage to Mecca (right).
- Halal (Arabic for 'permissible') food is that which adheres to Islamic law, as defined in the Qur'an. The criteria specify what foods are allowed and how the food must be prepared.
- For example, animals must be alive and healthy at the time of slaughter and all blood is drained from the carcass.

Judaism

- The synagogue is not just the place of Jewish worship but is also a centre for community and education. The Ark (where the scrolls are kept), the bimah (reading desk) and the ner tamid (eternal light) are among the main features.
- Food laws strictly govern what Jews can eat. There are detailed teachings on what cannot be eaten and what is kosher.
- Rites of passage (such as Brit Milah, Bar and Bat Mitzvah) are significant times in a Jew's life. There are also special ceremonies for marriage and death.
- Shabbat (the Sabbath) is observed both at home and in the synagogue, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at sunset on Saturday. It is a day set aside for rest and worship and there are strict rules about what work can be done during this time.
- There are many Jews who would not closely observe kosher or the Sabbath. They may class themselves as 'Reform Jews', with more traditional believers often described as 'Orthodox'.
- Festivals are very important in Jewish life, including Rosh Hashanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), Sukkot (Feast of Booths) and Hanukkah. They are often celebrated in the home and frequently have a historical significance.

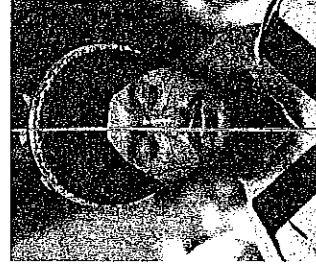
Sikhism

- A Sikh may wake early, bathe and begin the day by meditating on God.
- There are set prayers that a Sikh should recite in the morning (including the Mool Mantar), the evening and before going to sleep.
- In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh formed the Khalsa and introduced the Five Ks.
- The wearing of the Five Ks is a daily public demonstration of a Sikh's worship and devotion. They are:
 - Kesh (uncut hair) – holiness and strength;
 - Kara (a steel bracelet) – restraint and gentleness;
 - Kaccha (a wooden comb) – clean mind and clean body;
 - Kirpan (steel sword) – struggle against injustice.
- Sikhism requires service to Waheguru (God), to the Khalsa and to all of humanity.
- An important aspect of Sikhism is to provide a service to the community (Sewa).

Quick Test

1. Why is the cross important for Christians?
2. Why is pilgrimage to Mecca important to Muslims?
3. Why are dietary laws important for Jews?
4. What are the Five Ks?

Revise



Key Point

Religious symbols are key to a Sikh's faith.

Key Words

crucifix
fellowship
Shahadah
Zakah
sawm
Hajj
kosher
Shabbat
Yom Kippur
Khalsa

Practice Questions

How Do They Live Their Lives?

1. What is the Jewish holy day called and when does it take place? [2]

2. Name two festivals that a Jew will observe. [2]

3. What are the significant rites of passage in Jewish life? [2]

4. What does the Sabbath celebrate? [2]

5. Why do you think the rite of baptising babies was introduced? [3]



Practise

6. What are the four rites of passage in Christianity? [4]

7. What are the Five Pillars of Islam and how do they guide a Muslim's life? [5]

Total Marks _____ / 20