

The Nature of God in Christianity

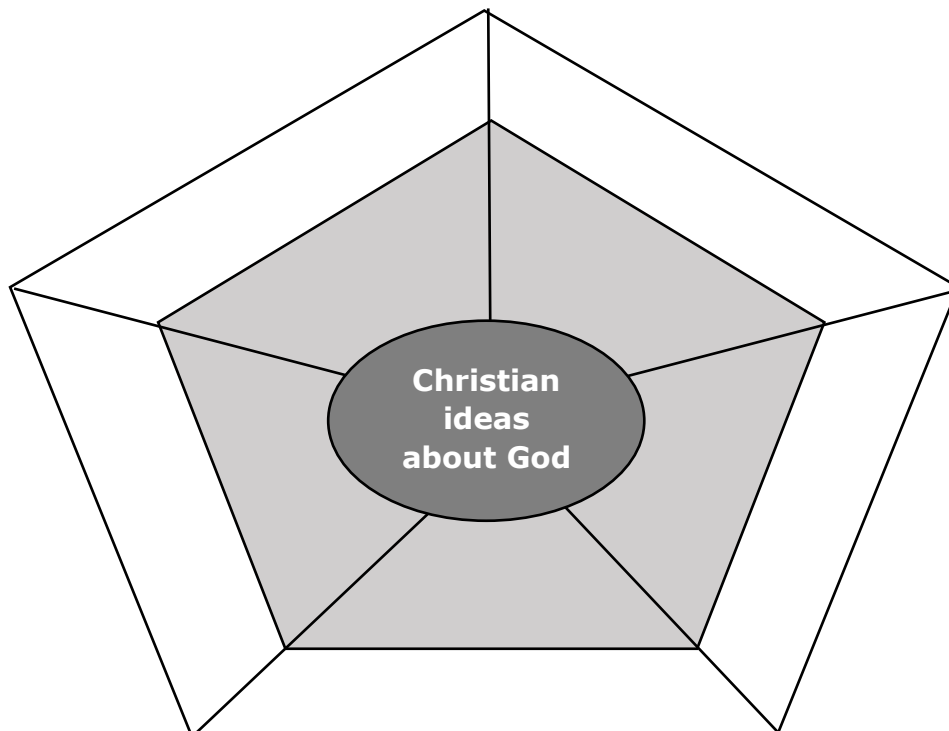


Image: *Making or Marring*, James, age 13, Warwick.
Winner of NATRE Art in Heaven competition 2019

This unit will help you to learn and revise Christian ideas about the nature of God. The activities are designed to be useful for GCSE Religious Studies full or short course across all the exam boards.

Five ideas

Using the picture above for inspiration, mind map 5 Christian ideas about what God is like in the middle of the diagram. Around the outside, try to write where these ideas come from, e.g. is there a passage from the Bible, or from a Creed?



Extra info

Carefully study the information below. Compare this to your work on the previous page. Which ideas did you write about in your diagram? Add some of the ideas you missed to the outside of the pentagon diagram to give you a good visual revision resource.

What do Christians say about God?

The Trinity

Christians believe there is only one God but they believe that there are three distinct parts of that one God (God the Father; the Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit). This is known as the Trinity. All three are one yet the one is three.

I believe in the Trinity of God; that He's a father, son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. I see God the Father as an organiser of everything in the universe. I see Jesus as a part of God who tries to get humanity to 'see the light' and live by God's rules and I see the Holy Spirit as an essence or feeling that comes over you to guide you down the right path of life.

Christian, aged 15

A Christian might say: I believe that Jesus Christ, a human being like us but perfect like God – is my Lord.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come to judge the living and the dead.

A Christian might say: I believe that God has created me and all that exists. He provides me with food and clothing, home and family, guidance, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in times of danger and guards me from every evil.

A Christian might say: God has sent me his Holy Spirit to encourage and enable me to live as he wants me to.

The Trinity: Explain it!

God the Father	God the Son	God the Holy Spirit
One God because...		

Eight key words

Here are some key words the Christians use when describing their beliefs about God. Can you remember what they mean? Write your answers in the middle column. Use the internet to check whether you have got them right. Once you have done this, use the righthand column to number them in the order of importance you think a Christian might place on them. Give reasons for numbers 1 and 8.

Key word	Meaning	Order of importance
Trinity		
omnipotent		
creator		
omnibenevolent		
sustainer		
omniscient		
merciful		
transcendent		

Have we missed any important words? If so, write them here:.....

Exam practice

Describe Christian beliefs about the nature of God.

Be sure to include at least 3 key words from the activity above and two references to sources of wisdom and authority, such as the Bible, a Creed or a religious leader.

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Is the God of Christianity merciful and loving or full of vengeance and anger?

Most Christians see God as loving, merciful and forgiving. Jesus, whom most Christians believe is God in human form, taught Christians to love even their enemies (Matthew 5:44) and always to forgive those who do them wrong. However, the Bible tells how God often showed anger towards people who were sinful, sometimes even destroying them. Christian views of God are not always straightforward.

What can we learn about God from the Story of Jonah?

Jonah was no typical prophet! He was stubborn, rebellious and deliberately disobeyed God. He grew hateful towards God because of the compassion God showed towards his enemies.

Watch these clips which talk about the story of Jonah:



The Bible Project: Overview of the story of Jonah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLIabZc0O4c>



RE Quest.org: Judgement versus mercy
<https://request.org.uk/issues/judgment-versus-mercy/>

N.B. The Book of Jonah is the Old Testament. It is part of the Hebrew scriptures. This means that the Story of Jonah can help with answering questions from a Jewish as well as Christian perspective.

Summarise the story of Jonah in no more than 5 bullet points:

Do you think this story shows that God is loving and merciful or angry and vengeful?

Evaluation Practice

Before trying this evaluation question, think about what your main arguments are going to be and what evidence or sources of wisdom you will use to back them up. Remember to say in your answer how strong or weak you think arguments are, giving reasons for this.

'Christians believe in an angry and vengeful God.'

Discuss/evaluate

(For the exact wording that your exam board uses to ask your evaluation questions, see the next page).

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Evaluation question types for the different exam boards

Different exam boards have different ways of asking evaluation questions. When you see an 'evaluation practice' activities in the home learning materials, we will give you a statement to evaluate, and follow it with 'Discuss/evaluate'. Look up your exam board on the grid below to remind yourself of the exact wording you will see on the exam paper for an evaluation question, and how many marks you can earn from them.

AQA – 12 marks Evaluate this statement: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• refer to the teaching of the religion in question• give reasoned arguments to support the statement• give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view• reach a justified conclusion.	Eduqas and WJEC – 15 marks Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Refer to religion and belief.
OCR – 15 marks Discuss this statement. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyse and evaluate the importance of points of view, referring to common and divergent views within the religion in question• Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.	Pearson Edexcel – 15 marks Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• refer to teachings of the religions in question• refer to different religious points of view• reach a justified conclusion.

BBC Bitesize GCSE Religious Studies Resources

The BBC Bitesize website has GCSE Religious Studies resources for each of the exam boards. You will find basic information relating to the topics that you need to learn about as well as useful videos and quizzes to test your knowledge and understanding. You can find these by following the link or QR code below:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zb48q6f>



GCSE Religious Studies web pages for Exam Boards

The GCSE lessons to take away from RE Today have been designed to help with all the GCSE specifications available, whatever exam board you use at your school.

It is very important, especially when working at home, that you know which exam board and specification you are following. If you're not sure, have a look at your school's website or contact your teacher online, e.g. by email.

The exam boards' websites have detailed information about the course you are studying. They also have past exam papers and mark schemes. Some of them have free learning resources for you to download and use as well. Here are the links and QR codes that will take you directly to the GCSE Religious Studies pages for each of the exam boards.

AQA		https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062
Eduqas		https://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/gcse/
OCR		https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/religious-studies-j625-j125-from-2016/
Pearson Edexcel	 	Specification A (Faith in Practice in the 21 st Century): https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-a-2016.html Specification B (Beliefs in Action) https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-b-2016.html
WJEC (Wales)		https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/r-religious-studies-gcse-2017/