

The Archbishop of York

‘Life is a pilgrimage to find our way home to God’

In the Summer 2024 issue of *REtoday*, we ran an interview with Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York. He is a good friend to religious education, and his new book *P is for Pilgrim* (Hodder & Stoughton 2024) gives short definitions and descriptions of key Christian teachings. Of course, that is what GCSE RS and other exam candidates do, so we asked some students to tackle the business of defining big ideas in Christianity.

Here is the challenge we set for pupils:

A chance to revise your key Christian concepts for RS exams.

We gave GCSE RS examination students and pupils studying for Scottish Certificates a list of key words and invited them to use a process called ‘define–compare–improve.’ See the Archbishop’s book *P is for Pilgrim* (full details below) for his explanations of the different concepts: seven examples are quoted in the magazine article on pages 12–14 in *REtoday* Autumn 2024, vol 42 no 1. Templates on the following pages list some key Christian concepts alongside space for students’ own writing.

Step 1:

Students write a description of the meaning of a key concept in 50 words.

Step 2:

They compare their 50 words on each of these key Christian ideas with what Archbishop Stephen wrote.

Step 3:

They rewrite their definitions, improving them in the light of the Archbishop’s ideas.

We felt sure this interesting and authentic revision task would enable students to do their examination work better.

We used 16 concepts (there are lots more in Archbishop Stephen’s book) that are close to the heart of examination papers on Christianity, but encouraged our students to tackle six or eight of these really well rather than rush through them all. These words all come up in GCSE RS exams, and in Scottish certificated studies as well.

P is for Pilgrim by Stephen Cottrell, illustrations by Jack Seymour (Hodder & Stoughton 2024)
ISBN 9781399805278

A chance to revise your key Christian concepts for RS exams – and to share your thinking with Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York. The Church of England has two Archbishops who lead the Christians. This is Stephen. He wanted to write a book to explain the big ideas of Christianity to young people like you. It's called *P is for Pilgrim* (Hodder & Stoughton 2024). Archbishop Stephen says: ***'life is a journey – a pilgrimage - the gift of life is given to us so that we can find our way back home to God.'***



Photo: Duncan Lomas, Ravage Productions

What is this about?

In this work, please begin by writing under 50 words about each of these key Christian ideas into the boxes. You will then be able to check your understanding of the words by comparing your ideas to what Archbishop Stephen wrote. Then you get to improve your definition of the key ideas by adding some of his ideas to your work. At the end, write your message to Archbishop Stephen. We will send the messages to him, and we will publish the best work in *REtoday* magazine.

For each of these ideas, write your definition or description of what the word means. Try to be detailed and clear. Don't write more than 50 words for each key idea. You could do all 16 (there are lots more in Archbishop Stephen's book), but it is better to do 6 or 8 really well than rush through them all. The words all come up in GCSE RS exams.

<p style="text-align: center;">Adam and Eve</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Baptism</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Cross</p>	

Disciple	
Evangelism	
Faith	
Gospel	
Heavenly Hope	

Incarnation	
Jesus	
Kingdom of God	
Love	
Mercy	

Nicene Creed	
Our Father	
Pilgrim	

Return your 'first go' answers to your teacher. You will then get to see what the Archbishop said about each of these key concepts. Discuss the differences between his answers and your answers with a partner, then rewrite yours to show what you learned.

Finally, write a message for the Archbishop: he is interested in your thoughts about these ideas.

Dear Archbishop Stephen...