

Name:

Teacher:



AQA RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

1. Three themes run throughout the Bible which symbolise humanity's search for the Kingdom of God.
2. These three themes consist of; Life and Death, Light and Darkness, Truth and Lies.
3. In Genesis 3 we see that human beings fall into *darkness* and *death* because of the serpent's *lie*.
4. Jesus comes to us as the 'Light of the World' meaning He is the Way back to Truth and to Life.
5. Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, the only way to the Father is through Me' (John 14: 6)
6. Jesus also tells us, '**I have come that you might have life and have it the full**' (John 10: 10).
7. It is in Jesus that we find fullness of life, truth and light... It is in Jesus that we see the Kingdom of God.



(John 15: 1-11)

Jesus says... 'I am the true vine'

Jesus explains that unless we live in Him and allow Him to live in us then we will never bear fruit. We will never be truly alive.



(John 14: 11)

'I am in my Father and my Father is in me'

Jesus explains that it is through Him that we are brought into the love of the Trinity. When we let Jesus live in our hearts we let God live in us too.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The **Kingdom of God** is initiated in the **Incarnation**. Jesus' presence as God's Word made flesh starts the gradual process of building God's Kingdom on earth. It begins with Jesus' incarnation and, after his **ascension** into heaven, continues with the work of the **Apostles** and the early Church at **Pentecost**. It continues today. The Church is the sign of God's Kingdom on Earth. The Kingdom will be completed at the end of time.

8. Jesus announces the Good News, 'The Kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe' (Mk 1: 51)
9. The Kingdom of God is not a geographical place... It is about accepting the reign of God in our lives.
10. Every parable Jesus ever shares with us is really about the 'Kingdom of God' and how we find it...
11. In the Prodigal Son, the Kingdom is the Father's house, in the Good Samaritan, the Kingdom is Jerusalem etc.

KINGDOM PRAYERS

12. Jesus teaches his followers to pray for the Kingdom in the **Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew 5-7)
13. Jesus explains that we must become holy... '**Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect**' (Mt 5: 48)
14. Jesus says, '**love your enemies**' (Mt 5: 44)... This goes further than any other religious teaching...
15. The Kingdom of God on Earth starts with Mary and Jesus. Their prayers about the Kingdom are below!

Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

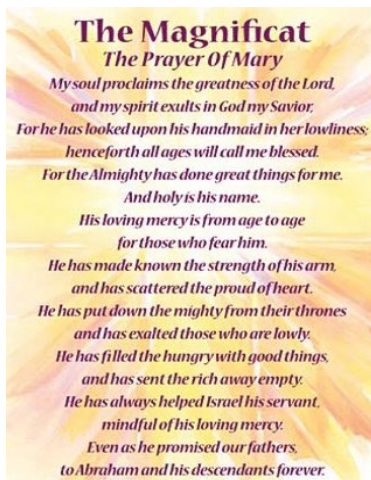
Jesus teaches us to put God before everything else...
In the 'Our Father' Jesus mentions God first!

Jesus teaches us to be obedient and do God's will...
We must learn to live as God wants us to!

Jesus teaches us not to desire more than we need...
We must remove all distractions and focus on God!

Jesus teaches us to always be willing to forgive...
Forgiveness removes all barriers to our relationships.

Jesus reminds us that we are on a journey...
We must choose to remain in God's Kingdom!



Mary tells us in 'the Magnificat' that God does not see things in the same way that people do. When Mary conceives by the Holy Spirit she is just a poor Jewish unmarried girl living in Nazareth. She is lower than the lowest in her society. And yet, she is to become the 'Mother of God'!

When Mary says, 'Let it be done to me according to thy word' (Lk 1: 38) she agrees to bring Jesus into the world. She is the first to experience the Kingdom of God and to share God's Kingdom with others. Mary is first among saints!

The Prayer of Mary echoes the Song of Miriam in the Exodus. As God leads the Israelites out of Egypt Miriam sings, 'Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted. The horse and its rider he has hurled into the sea.' (Exodus 15: 20-22). It also links with the Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2: 1-10) and Psalm 113.

The Magnificat has been seen as a song of revolution. Words such as 'He has put down the mighty from their thrones' and 'sent the rich away empty' show the poor that God is their God and that He is on their side!

SIGNS OF THE KINGDOM

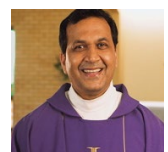
16. There are three signs that can be seen when we are allowing God's Kingdom to reign on Earth...
17. These three signs of the Kingdom are: i) **Peace**, ii) **Justice** and iii) **Reconciliation**...
18. All Christians should work to make these three things a reality and build God's Kingdom on Earth.
19. Jewish people believe that these three things will come with the beginning of the **Messianic Age**.
20. Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Kingdom of God has already come!

VOCATION

21. Christians believe that God does not make mistakes. All people are created with a special purpose or vocation.
22. St John Henry Newman said, 'Our souls remain restless' until we find our true vocation (i.e. purpose in life)
23. Some Catholic men are called to **Priesthood** to serve the Church and to administer the Sacraments...
24. Some are called to **Religious Life** and join **Religious Communities** as **nuns** or **monks** to pray for the Church...
25. Some serve the Church through supporting **international charities** such as **CARITAS Internationalis** or **CAFOD**.
26. Others help the vulnerable in their local communities through **Justice and Peace** groups or charities like **SVP**.
27. Others are called to **Family Life** and bring children into the world as the next generation in the Church.
28. Others find purpose through their friendships or through dedicating their lives to a particular line of work.



It is only when we allow Jesus to live in and work through us that the **Kingdom of God** becomes a reality on Earth today. We all have our part to play in accepting the teachings of Jesus and becoming active members of Christ's body... The Church.



THE CHURCH

29. The Church is not a building... Rather it is the people or the community established by Jesus himself.
30. Members of the Church consider themselves to be on a journey as the '**Pilgrim People of God**.'
31. The Church *should* be a visible expression of Christ's love for the world... Nobody should feel excluded.
32. Jesus instituted *Peter* as first leader of the Church and imparted some of His authority to the Apostles.
33. Catholics believe this same authority rests with the Pope to this day because of **Apostolic Succession**.

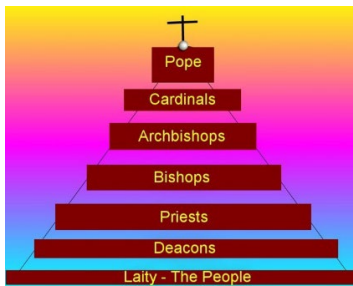


Pope Francis

"I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own

The authority of the Pope comes from Jesus himself when He chose Peter to be the first leader of the Christian community. The Pope is known as the '**Vicar of Christ**' meaning Christ's representative on Earth. The Pope is also known as the '**Pontiff**.' This is from the Latin phrase, '**Pontifex Maximus**' which means the '**Great Bridge Builder**.'

THE HIERARCHY OF THE CHURCH...



The **hierarchy** of the Catholic Church shows that the **Pope** is at the top and that his authority is passed down. This authority enables priests and bishops to administer the sacraments, to **consecrate the Eucharist** and to **absolve sins**. It is important to remember that all authority in the Catholic Church stems from Jesus himself. Authority within the Church can be exercised in two ways; i) through the Pope (**pontifical**) or (ii) through a Council (**conciliar**). A council only has authority because of the Pope. Catholics take the teachings of the Pope and Councils very seriously indeed.

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL...

34. Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council in **1962**. Unfortunately, he died soon after this.
35. Pope John XXIII had called on the Council to 'open the windows' of the Church and let fresh air in.
36. The Council continued under Pope Paul VI and closed in 1965. **In this time the Church was reformed.**
37. Many Catholics saw the Vatican II Documents below as necessary. To others, the reforms go too far...

VATICAN II DOCUMENTS...

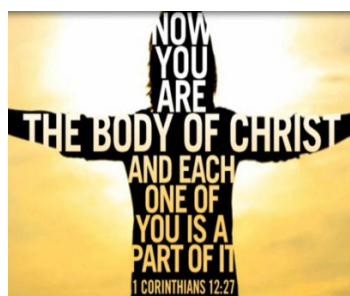
Dei Verbum (The Word of God)	Looked at understanding of the Bible... Agreed that the Bible is authoritative as the Word of God. Agreed that the Bible SHOULD NOT be read literally. Stressed the importance of Magisterial Teaching and guidance. Stressed the need for understanding of Church Tradition .
Lumen Gentium (Light of the Nations)	Looked at the structure of the Church... Agreed that the Church should be seen as ' the Body of Christ '. As parts of one body ALL roles are important. The Laity should be actively involved in parish work and leadership. Vocations to ALL parts of the Church should be supported.
Sacrosanctum Concilium (Sacred Council)	Looked at the Sacred Liturgy... Agreed that the Mass no longer needed to be in Latin. Masses could now be said in the language of those attending. Accepted the inclusion of contemporary music . Encouraged greater participation from the laity in the Mass.
Gaudium et Spes (Joy and Hope)	Looked at the Church in the Modern World... Encouraged peace and tolerance across ALL world faiths. Agreed that ALL people are sacred in the eyes of God. Promoted greater inter-faith work and continual dialogue . Agreed that God speaks to ALL people through their conscience .

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

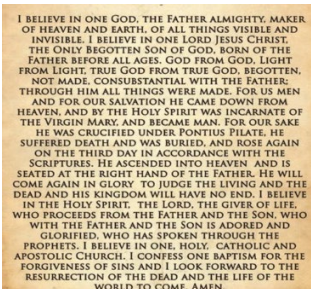
38. **Catholic Social Teaching** refers to the collective writings which show Catholics how they should live their lives.
39. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) began with the encyclical **Rerum Novarum** which spoke out for **workers' rights**.
40. **CST** is about **faith in action** and putting the most **vulnerable people** in society first... '**Concern for the poor**'
41. **CST** is about **stewardship** and respecting **human dignity**... It is about standing **against exploitation and greed**
42. Remember, Catholics believe that receiving Jesus in the Eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life.
43. The Kingdom of God starts and continues with Jesus who is present in the Mass through the Body and Blood.



These **FOUR MARKS** define what the Church of Jesus should be.



St Paul teaches that all members of the Church are important.



The Nicene Creed is the statement of faith for **ALL** Christians.

PILGRIMAGE SITES



The name Jerusalem literally means '**City of Peace**'. Jerusalem is an important Pilgrimage site to all three Abrahamic Religions. Millions of people journey to Jerusalem every year. For some, this journey is about trying to feel **closer to God**. For others, it is a chance to explore and learn about many of the **Holy Places**. For others, it is about **searching for truth**. Many choose to walk the **Via Dolorosa** (the way of sorrows). This is the path Jesus walked with the cross on the way to His crucifixion. Others visit the **Holy Sepulchre**; the Church built over the empty tomb where Jesus rose from the dead.

- 44. Many Christians go on **pilgrimage** as a type of '**dramatised prayer**' to establish a better connection with God...
- 45. A pilgrimage involves a **physical** and a **spiritual** journey... It is for the '**whole person**' (mind, body and soul)
- 46. Going to actual places can make stories from the Bible and the teachings of Jesus feel real and more alive!
- 47. Many Christians are unable to travel on pilgrimage owing to the financial cost or personal circumstances.
- 48. All Christians are able to reflect on the **14 Stations of the Cross**. This can also be done as a **dramatised prayer**.
- 49. These 14 Stations include; **Jesus falling for the first time**, being **crowned with thorns** and **dying on the cross**.



St Peter's Basilica (Vatican City)
Rome is the centre of the Catholic faith. It is where the current Pope lives and where St Peter the first Pope was martyred. His tomb is still there.



The Slipper Chapel (Walsingham)
England's Catholic shrine. It is where a noblewoman received visions of Mary's house in Nazareth and built a copy. Catholics can walk the holy mile.



The Immaculate Conception (Lourdes)
A small French town where St Bernadette saw visions of Mary. She dug in the ground to make a spring which is said to have healing powers.

DRAMA AND EXPRESSION



In this famous story by Victor Hugo, the ex-convict Jean Valjean has been reduced to living like a wild animal as everyone in society continues to see him as a dangerous criminal. Valjean attacks and tries to steal money from the Bishop of Digne. When the police arrest Valjean the Bishop pretends that the money was a gift. He shows Valjean the love of God in this act of total forgiveness. Valjean promises to become a new man. Throughout the story, Inspector Javert continues to hunt for Valjean, believing that he will never change. In many ways, Inspector Javert represents the Jewish people at the time of Jesus who believed that God's Kingdom was only for them as the ones who obeyed God's Laws. Valjean can be seen to represent the sinners that Jesus also called to be a part of the Kingdom of God. The Jews did not like this development and neither does Javert!

In this true story about the Jesuit Mission in South America you can follow the story of the former slave owner Rodrigo Mendoza who kills his own brother. Mendoza believes there can be no forgiveness for a man such as himself but has his mind changed for him when he meets Father Gabriel of the Jesuit Order. In completing a penance which sees Mendoza carrying all of his weapons in a bundle up a great mountain and facing the family of those he has killed he learns to forgive himself and begin a new life in the Kingdom of God. Mendoza joins the Jesuit order and dedicates his life to serving the people he once hunted. When the Church becomes entangled in the politics of Europe the Jesuits have to make a choice. Do they accept the authority of the Church or stand with the tribal people? What comes first... Obedience to the Church or conscience?



'Faith calls for a journey, a 'going out.' Purification takes place on the journey of life that is often uphill, because it leads upwards'.
(Pope Francis said on Twitter in November 2019)