

Year Group 5	Christianity - Salvation
Strand:	Beliefs and Questions
Key Question:	What do Christians believe about the death of Jesus?
Focus of study:	Explain significance of the death of Jesus. Identify key beliefs held by Christians regarding His death. Discuss impact of Jesus' death on Christian practices and worship.

Background information for teachers:

The death and resurrection of Jesus are key moments in the Christian Bible. The Big Story starts a good creation by a good God, a fall from grace by rebellious and sinful humanity, and efforts by God to reverse the impact of sin, drawing people back to himself through his chosen people, the people of Israel. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is the keystone in this Christian understanding of the story. Many Christians explain the death of Jesus as a sacrifice. This reflects the language of the Bible (for example, 1 John 2:2: 'we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.' NIV).

Jesus' death is foretold in the Old Testament by Isaiah. Jesus also predicts his own death at the Last Supper and throughout his ministry: Mark 8:31-32, Matthew 17:22, Matthew 20:17-19.

In the Old Testament, people would offer sacrifices of a young goat or a lamb to show that they were sorry for their sins, and to acknowledge that sin demands a punishment. One way of seeing Jesus' death is to argue that he willingly gave up his own life, in order to take on himself the punishment for all sin, for all people. Because of sin, people need to be saved, and Jesus brings salvation. Jesus' sacrifice is an atonement for sin. Christians might read the Passion narratives of the Gospels to make sense of the 'big story' of God's salvation; some might use it to remind themselves of what they owe Jesus — they should be grateful that he has taken their punishment; others might read it to see what example Jesus set in the face of persecution — they are inspired by his willingness to lay down his life for his friends.

The other element to lead to an understanding of the death of Jesus is the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and in particular, the Passover element of the story. There are links between Easter and Passover from the Biblical narrative — the events of Holy Week take place during the preparations for Passover. At the Passover a lamb was sacrificed, and its blood was put on the doorposts to ensure that the inhabitants of that home were not killed. Jesus is the Lamb of God — the Passover Lamb. Many theologians believe that the crucifixion took place on the day that the Passover lambs were slaughtered, but others believe that the Last Supper was the Passover meal. Either way, there is symbolism within the Passover meal that links to the death of Jesus — such as the three matzos in a cover, the middle one of which is broken and hidden. Many Christians believe that the broken matzo foreshadows the broken body of Jesus, and the hidden piece being Jesus being hidden.

The impact of believing that Jesus gave up his life so that they can be forgiven means that many Christians work hard themselves to forgive other people and to work for the rights of others. Many Christians practice some sort of sacrifice — giving things up for Lent for example or fasting, tithing 1/10 of their income, changing jobs to go where they believe God is calling them, helping others. Many charities have been set up by Christians to bring forgiveness to other people — the prison reformers of the 18th and 19th centuries were motivated by the belief that the death of Jesus meant that everyone has a chance of forgiveness. The Beatitudes, Jesus' teaching at the start of his ministry says the following: 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when you people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.' (Matthew 5:10-11) This motivates many Christians to overcome all kinds of challenges and keep going even when it's hard work.

Remember of course, that it is not only Christians who sacrifice themselves in such a variety of ways.

Prior learning:	<p>Christians believe that Jesus taught to show people how to live. Many Christians live to love and serve others. Christians believe that they can be forgiven for bad thoughts and actions. Christians believe that Jesus is one of the three persons of the Trinity. Christians believe that God sent Jesus to earth to show that he loved humans. Jesus is fully God and fully man. The incarnation is one of the central beliefs of Christianity</p>
Building Blocks:	<p>Christians believe that Jesus was crucified on 'Good Friday'. Christians believe that the Bible points to the need for humans to be saved from sin and restored to a good relationship with God. The New Testament teaches that Jesus died for the salvation of humankind. The example of Jesus' sacrifice is followed by some Christians.</p>
Outcomes:	<p>Create a timeline of Holy Week with particular reference to the crucifixion. Explain the meaning of and give some examples of biblical sacrifice. Explain some ways in which the sacrifice made by Jesus is different to Jewish sacrifice.</p>
Resources:	<p>https://request.org.uk/resource/restart/2017/06/10/holy-week/ The LEGO Easter Story - Stop Motion Animation (youtube.com) https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/holy-week-easter/ Stations of the Cross www.request.org.uk https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-and-atonement/ - good for teachers, probably not suitable for pupils. Open Doors – a Christian charity that works to support the persecuted church around the world. Open Doors Childrens' and Families' Pages</p>
Engagement: 1 Lesson	
<p>Lesson 1: To explain that Jesus knew he was going to die. Starter: Show the pupils a cross and ask pupils what they think it represents. Teacher records responses on board and initiate class discussion to explore various interpretations. Provide a brief overview of Easter and explain that Good Friday is an important part of the Easter story.</p> <p>Palm Sunday to Resurrection RECAP: main events from Holy Week. TASK: Write the heading for each event and a brief description.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. • Good Friday commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus, which took place the Friday before Easter Sunday. • Good Friday is a solemn day of remembrance and mourning for Christians. <p>At the Last Supper, Jesus indicated to his disciples that he was going to die "This is my body, this is my blood", and they were instructed to share bread and wine together to remember him. Matthew 26:26-29. Jesus predicts his own death: "I will destroy the temple and build it in 3 days".</p> <p>Jesus's death is also foretold in the Old Testament: Isaiah 53:5 "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."</p> <p>Isaiah 53:7 "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."</p>	

Isaiah 53:9

“He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.”

Activity: Hot-seat – How did Jesus feel about his approaching death?

Enquire and Explore: 3 Lessons

Lesson 2: To examine the crucifixion and its implications.

- Sequence and reflect on the events of Good Friday and their significance in the Christian story.

Introduce the concept of crucifixion as a form of execution that was historically used by the Romans. Jesus was not the only person who was crucified, it was used as a deterrent for those who opposed Roman rule. Explain that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Christian belief. (Don’t go into too much detail – crucifixion is the origin of the English word excruciating.)

- Define crucifixion: The act of execution by nailing or binding a person to a cross.

Share a brief overview of the crucifixion story, including Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial. Highlight that the crucifixion is commemorated by Christians during Holy Week and is central to their understanding of salvation and redemption.

Crucifixion Timeline:

Instruct students to create a timeline of the key events leading to and following Jesus' crucifixion. Encourage them to include key days, descriptions, and important individuals or groups involved. e.g., Palm Sunday. Last Supper, Garden of Gethsemane, Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, crucifixion, resurrection. In some Anglican and Catholic traditions people talk about the Stations of the Cross, which include events similar to, but not exactly in line with Biblical canon. It is worth comparing the two sets of events.

Biblical Account	Stations of the Cross
1. Agony in the Garden. Mark 14:32-36	1. Jesus is Condemned to Death
2. Jesus is betrayed and arrested. Mark 14:43-46	2. Jesus Carries the Cross
3. Jesus is condemned by Sanhedrin. Mark 14:55-64	3. Jesus Falls for the First Time
4. Pete denies Jesus. Mark 14:66-72	4. Jesus Meets His Mother
5. Jesus is judged by Pilate. Mark 15:14-15	5. Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross
6. Jesus is whipped and crowned with thorns. Mark 15:17-19	6. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus
7. Jesus carries his cross. Mark 15:20	7. Jesus Falls a Second Time
8. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross. Mark 15:21	8. Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem. Luke 23:27-31	9. Jesus Falls a Third Time
10. Jesus is crucified. Mark 15:24	10. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments
11. Jesus promises heaven to the thief who says sorry. Luke 23:39-45	11. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus on the cross talks to Mary and his friend. John 19:26-27	12. Jesus Dies on the Cross
13. Jesus dies on the cross. Mark 15:34-37	13. Jesus’ Body is Removed from the Cross
	14. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

Activity: Match the bible passage with art pictures, perhaps including some of the Stations of the Cross. Do the pupils know which are biblical and which are traditional? Add details. Which events in the story are most significant in terms of Christian understanding? Jesus was not the only person to be crucified in Palestine during the Roman occupation. How might his story be different and how is this interpreted?

Lesson 3: Who was responsible for the death of Jesus?

Discuss who the key players were in the crucifixion narrative. Which characters (or groups of people) do pupils believe were responsible for Jesus' death?

Diamond 9 Activity (provide children with cards with the following 9 people/groups) If the pupils have identified other people, you may give them blank cards to add.

- Pilate
- Judas
- The Romans
- The Crowd
- Peter
- The Sanhedrin (Religious Leaders)
- God
- Jesus
- All People

Pupils sort the cards, deciding who bears the greatest responsibility. Write an explanation for each person or group, describing why you think they had a role and how much of a role, and why. This could become the basis of a debate, or a written article. Do they think every Christian would agree? Does it matter?

Lesson 4: Explain the meaning of sacrifice.

Examples of sacrifice:

Iron Man, Rainbow Fish (gives away his scales), Harry Potter (mother's sacrifice), The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (Aslan sacrifice). Do the pupils know of any people who have made sacrifices? Does sacrifice always have to end in death? This may need handling sensitively – some families may have parents who miss meals in order to let their children eat.

What does sacrifice mean?

Definition of Sacrifice:

- An act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to a deity.
- An act of giving up something of value for the sake of something else.
- To offer or kill as a religious sacrifice.

Activities

Give an example of a sacrifice.

Christians view Jesus' death as a sacrifice. Which definition do you think most fits? Why?

List examples of sacrifices in the Bible and in stories/films that you know.

Explore different scenarios where people make a sacrifice:

Taking someone's place,

Bearing a burden,

Finding someone lost

Someone stepping in (taking place)

Think about how these scenarios link to the sacrifice of Jesus.

Why do you think he died?

Why did Jesus sacrifice himself?

How does Jesus' sacrifice affect Christians today?

What did Jesus say? "For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it." - Matthew 16:25

(Understanding Christianity Resource 2B.6/ Taken from RE Today 2016)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_OIRWGLdnw or

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-and-atonement/> - watch before you show this to pupils to check that it is suitable for your cohort. (it's the same film – in case YouTube is blocked in your school)

Evaluate:

Lesson 5: What is the impact of Jesus' death on Christians today?

If possible, interview some Christians about the death of Jesus. What does it mean to them? Pupils should create some questions to ask of them. The scenarios below could be used as well as or instead of the interviews.

What sacrifices do Christians make today, because of their belief in Jesus?

Consider those who suffer persecution for their beliefs, who give up jobs to go and work for charities or volunteer, who give their time for the church, who donate money etc. What other ideas do the pupils have? Church notice sheets and websites will show the types of things that some churches do. There are plenty of charities that support persecuted churches – Open Doors is probably the best. Read the scenario cards below. Think about how Jesus' death may have influenced the individuals or communities in each scenario. Choose one scenario and answer the question that follows.

Scenario 1:

John is a devoted Christian who believes that Jesus' death saved humanity from sin. He attends church regularly and finds comfort and hope in the teachings of Jesus. He feels grateful and finds strength in his faith during difficult times.

Scenario 2:

Lisa is not religious but has always been curious about different beliefs. She came across the story of Jesus' death and was deeply moved by the selflessness and sacrifice. She sees Jesus as a moral example and incorporates some of his teachings into her own life.

Scenario 3:

Joshua is from a community that has been historically marginalized and oppressed. He sees parallels between the suffering and death of Jesus and the struggles his community faces. He finds solace in the belief that there is hope for justice and liberation.

Question: Which scenario did you choose?

How do you think Jesus' death impacted the individual or community in that scenario? Write your answer in the space below.

In a paragraph, reflect on the impact of Jesus' death on people today. Consider its significance for individuals and communities.

Reflect and communicate: 1 Lesson

Lesson 6: What do Christians believe about the death of Jesus?

Summarise all that has been learned about the death of Jesus, perhaps by creating a mind map or revisiting a mind map if one was created earlier.
 Consider whether Christians are sensible to sacrifice themselves for someone who died over 2000 years ago? Evaluate their motivations.

What do non-Christians believe about the death of Jesus? Examine some of the evidence for the existence of Jesus. Is it the death of Jesus relevant to everyone? If so, in what ways? If not why not?

<p>Assessment opportunities:</p>	<p>Identifying the key events of Holy week and the crucifixion Writing an explanation of the impact of the death of Jesus. Producing relevant questions to ask a Christian about the impact of the death of Jesus.</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	