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| **Sacraments** | A sacrament is a Christian rite recognised as of particular importance and significance. There are 7 and they include baptism, marriage and Eucharist. |
| **Baptism** is a ceremony that involves someone being welcomed into the church. Christians may do this as Jesus was baptised. When an infant is baptized (sometimes known as a christening), the parents and Godparents make promises on their behalf. An adult baptism means the adult has chosen for themselves to follow Christianity and they are fully dipped into water to represent getting rid of any sin or wrongdoing. Through baptism, Christians show that they have been made clean by receiving God’s forgiveness for the things they have done wrong. |
| **Eucharist** (also known as communion) is a re-enactment of the last supper. It involves sharing bread and wine which was originally given by Jesus to represent that he was giving his body and blood for humanities salvation. Catholics practice this each week during their mass service. Other Christians may do it only at special occasions such as Christmas or Easter. |
| Roman Catholics believe in **transubstantiation**, meaning that they think the bread and wine that is offered is the actual body and blood of Christ. They believe that although the bread and wine physically remain the same, it is transformed beyond human comprehension into the body, blood soul and divinity of Jesus. |
| **Pilgrimage and celebration** | A pilgrimage is a journey to a special or sacred place. |
| Some Christians may go to **Taize** in France. Taize is an ecumenical order which means it welcomes Christians from all different denominations. Each year tens of thousands of young people go to Taize to share in the community’s way of life which involves prayer, periods of silence and simplicity. |
| **Walsingham** is a popular pilgrimage site in Norfolk, England. It is also known as Englands Nazareth. In 1061, the widow of the lord of the manor of Walsingham, called Richeldis, had a vision of the Virgin Mary. Mary took Richeldis in spirit to Nazareth to show the place where the Angel Gabriel had appeared to her. Richeldis was told to take note of the measurements of the Holy House and build a copy of it in Walsingham. Richeldis saw the vision three times. |
| **Christmas** is a Christian festival remembering the birth of Jesus. Here are some of the ways it is celebrated: the story of Jesus’ birth (the nativity) is re-told by children through nativity plays, church services often including carol singing – these are happy songs which tell the Christmas story, Some Christians start Christmas day with a midnight communion service (mass), gifts might be given or received which reminds Christians of the gift of Jesus |
| **Easter** remembers the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Holy week begins with palm Sunday where palm leaves might be used to remember how Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem. On Maundy Thursday, Jesus shared the last supper with his disciples. On good Friday Jesus was crucified by the Romans. The Bible says Jesus was innocent and that his death was a sacrifice for people’s sins. Throughout the gospels, Jesus says that he will have to die but that his death will save many. Jesus was resurrected on Easter Sunday. Easter is celebrated by giving eggs which are a symbol of new life, Christians might attend church and share communion. |
| **Christianity in Britain and the Church in the local community** | The **census** is a way of collecting information about the population. In 2011 there was a decrease in the number of respondents who identified as Christian (4 million fewer than 2001) although Christianity was still the largest religion with 59.3% of the results. The second largest religion was Islam which saw an increase of 1.5 million between 2001 and 2011. All others religious groups saw an increase as did the ‘no religion’ category. |
| Some people may argue that the UK is a Christian country as many of our laws have their foundation in Christian ethics, for example not stealing and not murdering are listed in the 10 commandments. However, other laws have changed recently and do not reflect the majority of Christian views such as legalising same sex marriage and abortion. Church attendance has also decreased and the rise of other religious influences may mean that Britain is no longer a Christian country. Further evidence to suggest that Britain may be a Christian country are the calendar (centred on important Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter) and the fact that bishops still sit in the house of Lords (where many laws are debated). |
| The **Church** plays an important role in the local community as it is not only used for Christian worship but for many other social functions such as school visits and hosts events such as parties and charity initiatives. |
| **The worldwide church** | Many Christians are **evangelical,** meaning they believe it is important to spread the ‘good news’ of Christianity with others so that they might be saved. |
| **Missionary work** means an organised effort to spread Christianity. |
| Christians have suffered persecution in the past. Just after Jesus had died, many people began joining the new religion that Jesus had started called Christianity. However, not everyone was happy with this new, rapidly growing religion. One of these people was the Roman Emperor Nero. Under his reign, **Christians were persecuted for their beliefs.** Many of Jesus’ disciples were persecuted and died horrible deaths such as being crucified or boiled alive. |
| **Tearfund** are a Christian charity. They believe their duty is to follow the example of Jesus and help the poor and needy. They work in over 50 countries and provide short and long term aid. |