

The Trinity: Oneness of God (Unity) - Christians believe in one God because: 1st of 10 Commandments says: ‘worship one God’; Creed says ‘I believe in one God’ and Jesus told his disciples the ‘greatest commandment is love your God with all your heart, mind& soul’. How Trinity expressed in belief - Trinity = 3 persons in 1 God. Father = Creator, loves us like his children, answers our prayers, protects us from evil. Son = always existed, but came to earth 2000 years ago to <u>save us</u> by dying and rising. God in flesh. Spirit = God’s presence on earth, way God communicates with us. Inspired Bible writers and Apostles at Pentecost, works through Church leaders and sacraments. Why Catholics believe this: CCC says ‘Holy Trinity is central mystery of the Christian faith’ which helps us understand how God connects with us: Father is outside us, Son beside us, Spirit within us. - Expressed in Bible: in Baptism of Jesus God says ‘this is my Son’, Son baptised, HS is a dove. Divergent Christian beliefs: - Most Christians believe in the Trinity, but Jehovah’s witnesses say word ‘Trinity’ not in Bible. Believe Jesus is just a good prophet and Spirit is sent by God, but neither are God. How doctrine (belief passed down) of Trinity developed: - It was handed on to early Christians through Apostolic tradition. Then written in Bible. Two councils show Trinity: First Council of Nicaea stated Jesus is equal to God (325 AD) and First Council of Constantinople confirmed Holy Spirit is equal to Father and Son (381AD). - Beliefs now written in Nicene Creed recited weekly in mass. How its reflected in daily life and worship - In mass: we make sign of cross and say ‘in name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit’; recite Nicene Creed and receive Eucharist (priest says a prayer which thanks Father and asks Spirit to descend and bless bread so it becomes Jesus) - In life, Christians try to love one another to reflect the love of the Trinity. Trinity in Bible: In Matthew, Jesus is baptised, Father says ‘This is my son’, Jesus baptised, Spirit as a dove. In Matthew, Jesus says ‘go make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit’. - St Peter said ‘Christians have been chosen by God the Father, through the work of the Spirit so they can be obedient to the Son’.	Creation: In Genesis 1 God made the universe in 6 days. Day 1 = heaven & earth, light from dark; 2 = separating earth from sky; 3 = land, plants and trees; 4 = sun, moon, stars; 5 = fish and birds; 6 = animals and humans. Male and female created at same time. In Genesis 2 God creates heavens and earth, then makes humans first. Adam from soil, breathes life into him (Holy Spirit gives life), trees and animals. God gives Adam special place in creation: power to name all the animals and birds. God makes Eve, companion for Adam. They commit original sin eating apple from tree of knowledge. Leave Eden. John 1:1 – 5 states Jesus is ‘the Word’ who ‘existed before the creation of the world... through him God made all things’ so Jesus present in creation. Significance of Creation accounts - Tells us God is Creator (so life is not an accident but purposeful creation); benevolent (all loving) because he’s pleased after each day; omnipotent (all powerful) as he creates <i>ex nihilo</i> (out of nothing) and eternal (no beginning or end) as he exists as a Trinity before he creates. - Humans must be special, only ones made in God’s image. We are made last in Gen 1 and given power to name animals in Gen 2. Catholic view of Creation accounts - Catholics see stories as symbolic, not factual or scientific. Supported by there being two different accounts in Gen 1 and 2 about when humans made. - Accounts tell us about God’s nature (omnipotence, benevolence etc.) and human nature (in God’s image but sinful). CCC says they show God is ‘origin of all that exists’. Creation stories tell us <i>why</i> we are here, but evolution tells us <i>how</i> we got here. - Catholics think you can believe Creation accounts and scientific accounts. Catholic priest Le Maitre invented Big Bang theory. Other Christian views of Creation accounts - Evangelical (fundamental) Christians believe Bible is direct word of God, so if Creation story says world made in 6 days, it’s true. Reject Scientific explanations. - Liberal Protestants believe stories aren’t factual accounts but give spiritual truths.	Nature of Humanity: - All people created uniquely in God’s image ‘let us make man in our own image, after our likeness’ Genesis. This sets us apart from other animals, gives human life importance and means we share these characteristics with God: - Free will and conscience – make own moral choices, know right from wrong; Love – give and receive love from God and others; Rational – use our reason and intelligence to reflect on world and find God; Humanity’s relationship with Creation - God created us, gave us dominion and stewardship: - Dominion – power over animals and earth’s resources. Can’t abuse them, but must harness God’s creation as He wants us to. CCC says ‘God wants us to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony for our own good and that of neighbours. - Genesis says God commanded humans to ‘fill the earth and subdue it’ to rule over all of creation. - Stewardship: responsibility to care for the world, so it’s here for future generations. Shown in: Pope Francis I’s letter ‘Laudato Si’ which says: ‘less is more, live simply’ as we waste too much of earth’s resources. CCC: respect nature and have ‘concern for the quality of life of our neighbours including generations to come’. Bible: Adam and Eve placed in ‘Garden of Eden’ suggesting we are here to care for world as one tending a garden. Non-religious beliefs about humanity’s relationship with creation: - Humanists don’t believe in God but see purpose of life to value human life, so try to protect environment as stewards of the earth. - Atheists don’t believe in God. Some think we should protect environment so it’s here for future, others don’t care.	
Incarnation - Means Jesus is ‘God in flesh’; God in human form. Virgin mother + God the Father - Jesus is fully God (divine) and fully human at same time. CCC: Jesus is true God and true man, not part of each. - Incarnation needed as man sinned, separating himself from God. In coming to earth, Jesus could die for our sins. Biblical evidence for incarnation: - Matthew: angel tells Joseph in a dream that Mary would give birth to Son of God. Jesus born in Bethlehem, David’s city, three kings give Jesus gifts showing he’s Son of God. - Mark: no birth story, but Jesus baptised and Trinity is present. - Luke: Angel tells Mary her child will be ‘Son of the Most High’. Shepherds worship Him as bringer of Good News to poor. - John: calls Jesus ‘word of God’ and says ‘word was with God and is God’ showing Jesus is Son of God who has always existed. ‘Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us’. Why incarnation is important - God must love us to sacrifice His Son; Jesus shows us what God is like; easier to relate to Jesus than invisible God; started salvation (born to die for us).	Paschal Mystery (Death & Resurrection) Main events ‘Paschal’ comes from ‘pasach’ (Passover). Jesus died at Passover, so Paschal mystery = mystery of how Jesus’ death and resurrection can bring salvation to all. Main events are: - Last Supper –Jesus says ‘this is my body...and blood’ whilst eating with disciples (starts mass). - Betrayal and Arrest – Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss, Jesus arrested, Peter cuts off ear of soldier, Jesus heals it. - Trial – Pontius Pilate tries Jesus for treason. People release Barabbas instead of Jesus. - Crucifixion – Jesus made to carry own cross, crucified between two criminals, under sign ‘King of the Jews’. Dies on Good Friday after 3 hours. - Resurrection – on Sunday women find tomb empty, stone rolled away. Jesus appears to Mary (disciple) then others. Roams earth for 40 days teaching people. - Ascension – Cloud covers Jesus, he goes up to heaven, two angels tells disciples he’s ascended. Importance of Paschal Mystery: - Death and resurrection proves Jesus is Son of God. CCC: resurrection has given the definitive proof of his divine authority’. CCC: by his death Christ liberated us from sin. - Guarantees our place in heaven: we can be saved through death and resurrection. Matthew: Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many (i.e. Jesus’ death pays price for our sins).	Salvation and Grace - Christians believe all humans sin; this separates us from God as he is all holy; but we have chance to of salvation through death and resurrection of Jesus. How Christians receive salvation - Baptism and Reconciliation remove sin; Eucharist unites us with Christ. - By living good Christian life, loving God and others we can be saved. Why salvation important - Reason Jesus died on cross; enables good relationship with God again; reason for Baptism and Reconciliation (to be cleared of sin) and attend mass (Eucharist). Nature of grace - Means ‘God showing us mercy without us deserving it’. We don’t deserve forgiveness, it’s a gift because he loves us. Three types of grace come through Spirit: - Sacramental Graces—these come to us through the sacraments. - Special Graces—for example the gift of miracles, words or wisdom. - The graces given to priests and bishops. Why grace is important - It’s the reason we take sacraments – Baptism and Reconciliation show God forgives our sins. - It’s why we try to live good lives e.g. following Parable of sheep and goats. Bible teaching on salvation and grace - John: ‘for God so loved the world he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’. So faith in Christ = saved. - Acts of Apostles: Peter says “Jesus is the ‘stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone’. Salvation is found in no one else”. i.e. we don’t deserve grace as we rejected Jesus (cornerstone) but through grace we’re saved. Different Christian understandings - Evangelical Christians believe these passages mean that only those who show faith in Christ will be saved. - Catholics believe it is impossible to say who will be saved, only God knows what it truly in a person’s heart so only God knows who has accepted his mercy.	Eschatology (teachings about life after death) - After death there will be a judgement where God decides where we go next. CCC: ‘each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of death’. - Those who have died perfectly pure (with no sin) go to heaven (place of peace and light where they will see God – the ‘beatific vision’. Bible says it is like a ‘wedding feast’ & will be a surprise: ‘what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived’. - Those with venial (lesser) sins go to purgatory to be purified. They are saved, being prepared for heaven. CCC: ‘after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven’. - Those who are very evil/ reject God are sent to hell. . CCC: hell is ‘separation from God’ (i.e. punishment) and teaches it exists, but not Catholic teaching that anyone is in there. Different Christian beliefs about life after death - Evangelicals say purgatory not in Bible and only true Christians will go to heaven, everyone else to hell as Matthew says those who believe will enter heaven.. but those who don’t will be cast out to ‘darkness’. - All Christians believe in immortality of the soul (belief that soul lives forever) because St Paul said we will have a ‘new glorified body’ in heaven and that Jesus had a new glorified body after resurrection. - Some think their soul will be immediately in heaven post death because Jesus said: ‘you will be with me in paradise today’. Why life after death is important for Christians - Gives them an incentive to lead holy lives and love God by attending mass; a reason to follow the Greatest Commandment; gives their life meaning and purpose.