

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES TOPIC 8 CHRISTIANITY PRACTICES



WORSHIP

FEATURES OF PRIVATE WORSHIP

People worship on their own or with close friends and family
Saying prayers out loud or in silence
Meditating
Bible study
Sometimes using objects such as rosary beads or an icon (religious image)

e.g. saying prayers in the morning, at mealtimes or before bed, setting aside time for Bible reading each day.

WHICH ONE IS BETTER?	
PRIVATE	PUBLIC
• Feel a personal connection with God • Can meet the needs of the individual at the time • Can take place at any time	• You feel part of a wider community • You receive support from other Christians

WHAT IS IT?

Worship is the act of religious praise, honour or devotion. It is a way for Christians to show their deep love and honour to God.

HOW IS IT IMPORTANT TO CHRISTIANS?

Worship is important to Christians because it gives them the way to;

1. Praise and thank God.
2. Ask for forgiveness
3. Seek help for themselves or others.
4. Deepen their relationship with God and strengthen their faith.



FEATURES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Bible reading
Prayers
Asking for and receiving forgiveness
Sermon (talk by the priest)
Singing
Holy Communion (Eucharist or Mass)



'Where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them.'

1

LITURGICAL AND NON-LITURGICAL

LITURGICAL WORSHIP

Follows a set pattern that has been the same for many years.

Includes particular prayers and actions in the same order, e.g.

- Asking for and receiving forgiveness
- Prayers that follow a set pattern
- Bible readings based on the Church calendar
- Singing hymns and psalms
- Holy Communion.

e.g. Roman Catholic Church and Church of England



NON-LITURGICAL WORSHIP

Does not have to follow a set pattern

Preachers can change the order and emphasis of the services in order to suit a particular theme – for instance, having different prayers, or fewer hymns
Likely to focus more on Bible readings relevant to current affairs
Less emphasis on Holy Communion

e.g. Methodist and Baptist churches



WHICH ONE IS BETTER?

LITURGICAL	NON-LITURGICAL
• A sense of continuity, tradition and belonging • Familiar words and actions mean worshippers know what to expect and what to do, including visitors, so everyone can join in	• Services can be adapted to suit different occasions • There is more variety in worship

INFORMAL WORSHIP

WHAT IS IT?

Informal worship follows no set patterns or rules, it is simply what believers want to do at the time.

- More free and spontaneous
- Worshippers will do and say what they feel is right in the moment

e.g. Quakers worship in silence and people speak out when they feel inspired to do so by the Holy Spirit

e.g. Pentecostal churches may include dancing, clapping and calling out as worshippers give a personal expression of their joy in believing in God. This is charismatic worship – led by the Holy Spirit



2

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT TO.....

LITURGICAL	Liturgical worship follows a set pattern and has the same readings/prayers in the same places all the time. Informal worship is spontaneous (no one plans what they are going to do in advance).
NON-LITURGICAL	Non-liturgical worship is usually still led by someone who has planned in advance what they are going to say, eg they may have prepared ways in which to link a modern day issue with the Bible. Informal worship is spontaneous, what people say and do has not been planned in advance

BENEFITS OF INFORMAL WORSHIP

- Worshippers feel a closer connection to the early church because they are worshipping in the way the first Christians did
- The role of the Holy Spirit makes worshippers feel very close to God
- More of a personal connection with God in the service as individuals say and do what they feel in the moment

USE OF THE BIBLE IN WORSHIP

WHY IS THE BIBLE USED IN WORSHIP?

Because it holds God's teachings and Christians feel that God speaks to them through it. This can be done in a formal service, or informally in a small group or privately/individually.



USE IN CHURCH

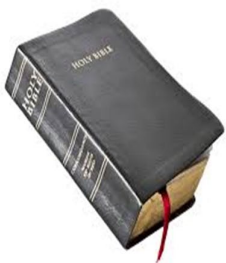
Many services will have Bible readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament. If a sermon is preached, it is often based on the Bible readings used, so Christians can see how and why the Bible readings are relevant to their faith and what they can learn from them.

Some hymns and worship songs are based on Bible passages, which provide Christians another way to connect to with its teachings.

USE AT HOME

Individuals may read the Bible at home, to build a relationship with God. For example, Christians could pick a Bible passage to read that helps them with something current in their lives.

Christians may also hold Bible study groups to look at Bible passages in more depth, or may study the Bible on their own, or with help from scholarly books.



USING THE BIBLE IS USEFUL WAY IN WORSHIP

YES	NO
• The Bible shows other people in difficult situations, which can show Christians that they are not alone in experiencing difficulties. • It is a good source of guidance on how to live, eg the 10 Commandments and the teachings of Jesus.	• It is difficult to relate it to modern life as many of the dilemmas we face today are not mentioned in the Bible. • It seems to contradict itself, eg Moses says to take revenge ('An eye for an eye') whereas Jesus says to forgive others.

WHAT IS IT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Prayer is communicating with God, either silently or aloud.

Prayer is important because;

1. It enables Christians to talk and listen to God.
2. It helps Christians feel closer to God.
3. It gives a sense of peace or strength in times of trouble.
4. It encourages reflection in the middle of a busy life.



PRAYER



HOW OFTEN?

There is no requirement on the number of times a Christian should pray, it is down to the individual.

HOW DO CHRISTIANS PRAY?

- Christians may use set prayers that have been written down.
- They may also use informal prayers that are made up by the individual using his or her own words to communicate with God.
- Some people kneel to pray, stand, put hands together or sit. They may also use a rosary or icons to aid prayer and keep their focus.



3

THE LORD'S PRAYER

When Jesus' disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, he answered with the **Lord's prayer**.

- It is a set prayer and a model of good prayer.
 - It reminds Christians;
1. Forgive others in order to be forgiven.
 2. God is the father of the whole Christian community and this gives Christians a sense of unity when it is said together.



The Lord's Prayer
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.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. *Amen.*

WHICH ARE BETTER?

SET PRAYERS	PRAYERS MADE UP BY THE INDIVIDUAL
• Using the same prayers unites the Christian community • Sometimes people don't know what to say to God – set prayers give people a way to speak to Him	• It gives people a closer connection with God • People are saying what they really feel rather than repeating words that they may not even fully understand

8

PILGRIMAGE - LOURDES

LOURDES – WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

In the 1840s, a girl called Bernadette claimed she had seen visions of the Virgin Mary at a cave near the river. The vision of Mary told her to dig in the earth to find a spring of water. When Bernadette's friend put her injured arm into the water, it was healed.

Since this first cure, there have been 69 healings claimed as miracles at Lourdes. Such claims are always carefully investigated to check they are not fake or that there is not a straightforward medical explanation.

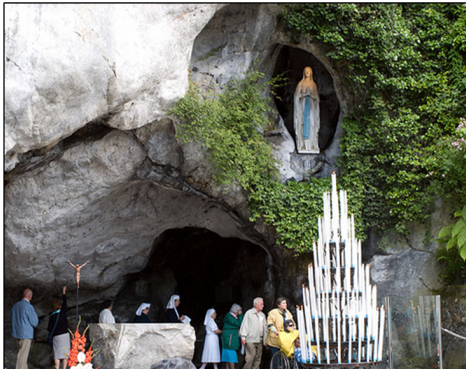


WHAT DO PILGRIMS DO THERE?

About 6 million pilgrims visit Lourdes each year. They take part in processions, light candles, pray, take part in church services, visit the cave or grotto where the visions happened and bathe in or drink the water from the spring. Many pilgrims bring home a bottle of the water when they leave.

Many seriously ill or disabled people visit Lourdes in the hope of a cure.

Many others fundraise to help others to make a pilgrimage as the journey can be expensive, especially if pilgrims need to travel with medical equipment.



9

PILGRIMAGE - IONA

IONA – WHY IS IT SPECIAL?

This was the site for the first Christian community in Scotland. It was begun by St Columba in the year 563 who built a monastery.

After the Viking invasions, the monastery at Iona closed. However, a new monastery was built there in the Middle Ages and many pilgrims came to visit it.

In 1938, George MacLeod, a Church minister, decided to rebuild a Christian community on Iona which would include men and women from all different Christian denominations (groups) who live as monks and nuns there.



WHAT DO PILGRIMS DO THERE?

When pilgrims go to Iona nowadays, they spend a few days or even longer staying on the island as part of the community.

They will travel around the island on one day, visiting all the special places such as the site of the original monastery and church. For the rest of the time, they will spend time in prayer and worship.

There are debates and discussions to attend on important issues such as justice and poverty as well as craft sessions and boat trips. Iona is a peaceful place where Christians can spend time thinking about God and sharing their faith with other Christians.

SHOULD ALL CHRISTIANS COMPLETE A PILGRIMAGE?

YES	NO
• It helps them to be closer to God by visiting a place that is special to their religion. • They get to meet other Christians and share their faith. • A pilgrimage to Lourdes could lead to a miracle.	• There is nothing in the Bible that says you have to go on pilgrimage. • You can meet other Christians and learn about your religion by going to Church. • God can make miracles happen anywhere, you don't have to go to a special place to get one.

CELEBRATIONS - CHRISTMAS

ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, believed to be the Son of God, who came to Earth to save humans from their sins.

While Easter, which celebrates Jesus' death and resurrection, is often thought to be more important, **there would be no Easter without Christmas**, and so Christmas is very important to Christians in Great Britain today.

Christmas is important for Christians today as **without Jesus' birth he would not have been able to die for people's sins.**

HOW IS CHRISTMAS CELEBRATED?

Celebrations reflect Christian beliefs and teachings:

Advent wreaths – represent the countdown to Christmas and the idea that Jesus is the light of the world.

Lights on houses and trees – represent Jesus as the light of the world

Nativity scenes – show baby Jesus being born into poverty.

Carol services – with Bible readings remind Christians about God's promise of a saviour.

Midnight Mass – reflects the holiness of the night.

Cards and gifts – recall the wise men's gifts to Jesus.



"The Word was made flesh"



6

3 STAGES OF CHRISTMAS

STAGE	WHAT IS IT?
ADVENT	The time leading up to Christmas, is an important time for preparation for Christians, waiting to symbolically welcome their Messiah into the world again.
CHRISTMAS	The time that celebrates the birth of Jesus in the stable in Bethlehem.
EPIPHANY	The time that celebrates the Wise Men visiting baby Jesus.

CHRISTMAS IS AN IMPORTANT FESTIVAL?

YES	NO
- Without Christmas, the sacrifice of Jesus at Easter would not have been possible. - Celebrating together is a way of uniting the Christian community.	- Easter is more important as this is when Jesus actually fulfilled his plan. - Christmas has become too commercial – for many people, its just all about presents.

7

CELEBRATIONS - EASTER

ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF CELEBRATING EASTER

Easter celebrates Jesus being **resurrected from the dead after being crucified.**

It is important to Christians in Great Britain today because it **celebrates that Jesus fulfilled the Jewish law, atoned for humans' sins**, and brought salvation, allowing Christians to be saved from sin, and to be able to have a close relationship with God

Easter can also be considered important because it indicates to Christians that **there must be resurrection of the dead if Jesus was raised**, so Easter gives Christians real hope for the afterlife.

Easter is important because the **whole of the Christian faith rests on Easter: the resurrection.** If Jesus did not rise, then he has not brought salvation, and there is no point in following him. But if Christians do follow him, then they can expect a heavenly reward.



'For Christ died for sins once and for all'

EASTER THE MOST IMPORTANT FESTIVAL?

YES	NO
- This is the fulfilment of God's plan to mend the relationship between himself and humans. - The resurrection of Jesus gives Christians hope that they too can be resurrected after death.	- Without Christmas, there could be no Easter. - Christmas is more widely celebrated in Britain today.

THE SACRAMENTS

4

WHAT ARE THEY?

A sacrament is a religious ritual that is an outward sign of a spiritual experience that brings the worshipper closer to God.

All sacraments have three elements:

Form – the ritual, including words and actions.

Matter – objects that are used in the ritual.

Intention – the reason for doing it, which is to receive the inward spiritual grace or gift.

DO ALL CHRISTIANS RECOGNISE THEM?

The Roman Catholic Church recognises seven sacraments which are Baptism, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Marriage, Healing and Ordination (becoming a priest/monk/nun), they do not believe that everyone has to complete all seven.

Most **Church of England churches recognise two sacraments** – Baptism and Holy Communion. This is because these were the only ones explicitly commanded by Jesus.

Some Christians, such as the Salvation Army, do not recognise any sacraments. This is because they think they could become just an empty ceremony and the important thing is your inner faith in Jesus, not the rituals you go through.

ARE THE SACRAMENTS IMPORTANT?

YES	NO
- They enable a Christian to show their faith to other people - Taking part in the same rituals unites the Christian community	- They can just be an empty ceremony – people doing them without thinking about what they mean - Showing your faith to other people is not important, what matters is showing it to God

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

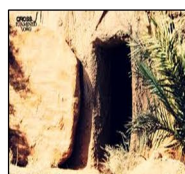


CELEBRATIONS - EASTER

7

STAGES OF EASTER.

STAGE	WHAT IS IT?	HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?
LENT	The time Jesus fasted for forty days and nights in preparation for his sacrifice	Many Christians give something up for Lent to remember that Jesus gave up food and drink at this time.
PALM SUNDAY	When Jesus arrived in Jerusalem and was welcomed by crowds waving palm leaves	Many churches have crosses made out of palm branches. It celebrates Jesus coming as king, before he died for humans' salvation. It serves to remind Christians that Jesus was a king, but not in the conventional sense.
MAUNDY THURSDAY	Remembers the Last Supper it was at this that Jesus performed the first Eucharist.	In the Catholic Church, the church sanctuary (church room) is left dark after the Maundy Thursday service, to show the darkness of Jesus' death.
GOOD FRIDAY	Remembers Jesus' crucifixion and death.	Special prayers are said in church and, traditionally, there is NO Eucharist (holy communion) on this day. Churches often have black coverings to symbolise the death of Jesus.
EASTER SUNDAY	Remembers Jesus' resurrection	Services on Easter Sunday celebrate the resurrection. The Eucharist will be celebrated. Many Christians exchange eggs to symbolise the new life of Jesus.



THE SACRAMENTS - BAPTISM

4

INFANT BAPTISM

Some Christians such as Roman Catholics and the Church of England believe in the importance of infant baptism (often referred to as a 'christening').

This is a service in which the parents and Godparents are making the promise to God that they will bring their child up to be a Christian.



"Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

HOW IS THE SACRAMENT PERFORMED?

Form - parents and godparents make promises, the baby is marked with holy oil and sprinkled with water, a candle is given

Matter - water, oil, candle

Intention - to start a new life as a Christian, to forgive sins

WHAT DOES THE SACRAMENT SYMBOLISE?
The water symbolises washing away Original Sin



BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

Some Christians such as Baptists will only baptise a person who is old enough to make the decision for themselves that they wish to be a Christian.

This is a service in which the individual is promising to live their life following the teachings of Jesus.

HOW IS THE SACRAMENT PERFORMED?

Form - the candidate gives a testimony of what they believe, they are immersed in water and brought out again

Matter - baptistry (pool of water)

Intention - to be forgiven sins and to be born into a new life as a Christian

WHAT DOES THE SACRAMENT SYMBOLISE?
Going under the water and coming out again represents dying and being born again in a new life, like Jesus' resurrection

"This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

THE SACRAMENTS - BAPTISM



INFANT BAPTISM

The decision for baptism is made by someone else

Promises are made
The water symbolises the washing away of original sin

Water is used

The baptised person is considered to be born again in a new life (ie as a Christian).

The decision for baptism is made by the individual

The individual gives a testimony of what they believe

The water symbolises that they have been born into a new life



BELIEVER'S BAPTISM

WE SHOULD ONLY BAPTISE PEOPLE WHO ARE OLD ENOUGH TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES?

YES	NO
- It is not fair to make promises on behalf on someone else – we should let people make their own decisions - Jesus himself was not baptised until he was an adult	- The promises being made are only to teach a child about Christianity, they have the option to ignore these teachings when they are older - Being baptised gives a baby a wider family to belong to (the Church)

5

THE SACRAMENTS – EUCHARIST (HOLY COMMUNION)



UNITED REFORM

MEANING

When the bread and wine is blessed, it is transformed and so **BECOMES** body and blood of Jesus.

MEANING

When the bread and wine has been blessed it **SYMBOLISES** the body and blood of Jesus.

CELEBRATION

It is a form of liturgical worship, the same prayers, words will be said each time.

It is a way of giving thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus

Jesus is present during the sacrament

CELEBRATION

The wine is served from the same cup to represent unity.

CELEBRATION

It is a form of non-liturgical worship, the Minister will begin with Bible readings and a sermon and these will be different each time.

CELEBRATION

The wine is served in individual cups and drunk at the same time to show unity.

SHOULD ALL CHRISTIANS TAKE PART IN THE EUCHARIST?

YES	NO
- It remembers the sacrifice of Jesus for humans and this is what the whole religion is based on. - Jesus specifically told his disciples to take bread and wine and remember his sacrifice.	- There are better ways to remember the sacrifice of Jesus than sharing bread and wine. - People should be free to remember Jesus in their own private way rather than have to take part in a public

THE SACRAMENTS – EUCHARIST (HOLY COMMUNION)

WHAT IS IT?

Eucharist means 'thanksgiving'.

Other names for the Eucharist include; Holy Communion, Lord's Supper and Breaking of Bread.

It is the sharing of bread and wine to remember that Jesus shared these with his disciples at the last supper and asked them to remember the sacrifice of his body (bread) and of his blood (wine).

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE EUCHARIST?

FORM - The priest reminds the worshippers of Jesus' words at the Last Supper and blesses the bread and wine. Then the worshippers come forward to receive it at the altar.

MATTER - The matter is the bread and wine which has been blessed by the priest and the plate and cup it is served in.

INTENTION - All Christians believe that at the moment of the sharing of bread and wine, Jesus is present with them as they remember and give thanks for his sacrifice when he died on the cross.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIANS

The Eucharist is important for Christians because when they do it, they are;

- Remembering Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper
- Giving thanks for his sacrifice on the cross which gave them hope of eternal life in Heaven
- Making a connection with Jesus and strengthening their faith.
- Receiving God's grace.
- Bringing the community of believers together.



THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP CHRISTIANS?

The role of the local church is important because of the help it provides.

It will provide services for worship, these allow Christians to worship God and to receive sacraments such as the Eucharist (holy communion).

As well as services, there are often Bible study groups, or other religious meetings, such as prayer meetings, at the Church, or other venues such as members' houses.

Churches may facilitate different age groups by running separate activities for younger children, or run services in local schools.

FOOD BANKS

Some churches support food banks which provide food for those in financial difficulty – people donate food or money to food banks and then food banks provide the food to those who have been approved by official figures such as doctors and social workers. This means people who are low on money.



STREET PASTORS

These are volunteers on the streets who provide practical support to communities and vulnerable people; for example, deterring vandals with their presence and providing clubbers with flip-flops for their walk home. In some areas where there are street pastors, crime levels have also dropped.



10

"Love thy neighbour"

DO WE STILL NEED CHURCHES IN BRITAIN TODAY?

YES	NO
- Churches do a lot to help the community, eg food banks and street pastors. - They unite and strengthen the Christian community.	- People can worship at home privately. - Many churches cost a lot of money to maintain and this could be spent on the poor.

HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP THE COMMUNITY?

Many churches run activity clubs for young people, toddler groups, lunch clubs for the lonely, soup kitchens for the homeless and many other things.

Local churches may also undertake projects on a larger scale, such as building a church in another country, or running another type of charity project.

Local churches often have collections to raise money for charities and good causes.

THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH

11

WHAT IS THE WORLD WIDE CHURCH?

The worldwide church can refer to the entire global Christian community, or can be used to refer to an individual Christian denomination globally; for example, the Catholic Church worldwide.



Desmond Tutu

WORKING FOR RECONCILIATION

The worldwide church is important because it works to reconcile conflict and inequality in a number of ways. Some Church leaders try to negotiate between conflicting parties to get them to come to an agreement. For example, Pope Francis, 266th leader of the Catholic Church, worked to reconcile the US with Cuba.

Churches speak out against inequality and campaign for laws to change to make things equal. For example, the Christian Church, including members such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu helped to reconcile white people and black people after apartheid in South Africa.

The Church works for reconciliation out of compassion. They want everyone to live in harmony – to create a better world. They also work for reconciliation because Jesus stressed that this is important. Jesus taught to treat enemies well, to forgive others, and to treat people with respect.

PERSECUTION

Many Christians worldwide are persecuted for their beliefs. They may not be able to worship publicly or have access to Bibles, and they may even face threats and violence.

Some Christians seek reconciliation with their persecutors, and forgive them, as Jesus taught. Many Christians try not to lose faith due to persecution, believing it is part of God's plan. However, some Christian Churches may meet and worship in secret to preserve the safety of their members, and some Christians are forced to leave their homes to escape persecution.



"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"

SHOULD CHRISTIANS FORGIVE THOSE WHO PERSECUTE THEM?

YES	NO
- Jesus taught people to forgive their enemies - Without forgiveness, a situation can never move on and we will never have true peace	- Some acts of persecution are too horrific to forgive - Forgiving persecutors could be seen as letting them off easy

WHAT IS EVANGELISM?

Evangelism is spreading the news about Jesus with the aim of converting others to Christianity.

Since Jesus' death, Christians have been trying to convert others, with many of them undertaking missionary work. This is where Christians specifically commit time to evangelising others, as well as helping with practical needs. This can be voluntary or paid.

THE NEED FOR EVANGELISATION

Evangelism is needed because more people in Christian countries may be atheists and agnostics where before the majority of people (who did not belong to another religion) attended church.

Christianity is declining in areas where it was previously very popular, such as Europe. It may be that for Christianity to grow in these areas it needs to modernise some of its values such as accepting homosexuality, for those denominations which do not.

For some, the Church needs to regain people's faith

EVANGELISATION

WHY DO CHRISTIANS WANT TO EVANGELISE PEOPLE?

Christians evangelise in the aim of fulfilling Jesus' command to spread the news about him – he commanded his disciples to do this before ascending to heaven. This is known as the Great Commission (commissioning is giving someone a task to do).

Some individual Christians want to evangelise out of compassion for those who do not know God, especially those who believe that Christianity is the only way to get to heaven as in the Great Commission, Jesus said that those who did not believe would not be saved.

Evangelism is important to the Church because it helps to keep the Church going.



"Make disciples of all nations"



SHOULD CHRISTIANS TRY TO EVANGELISE PEOPLE?

YES	NO
- They are only presenting information, they are not forcing people to become Christians - Some people believe that entry into Heaven is dependent on believing in God and Jesus.	- People should be free to believe what they want without others trying to change their mind. - Saying that people will not get into Heaven unless they are 'believers' feels like a threat.

12

CHRISTIAN AID

WHO THEY HELP?

Anyone who is in need. The name of the organisation comes from the reason why people help (because they are Christians) – the charity helps anyone from any religion or country.



The parable of the 'Sheep and the Goats' teaches Christians that those who help the poor will be rewarded.

Christian Aid carries out its work because of the biblical teachings to help others, and out of compassion for those who do not have what they need to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives. Christian Aid feels that everyone deserves the chance to have a fulfilling life without living in poverty, and wants to help make this a reality.



HEALTHCARE

Sends trained volunteers to give medical care. A major initiative is vaccinations (eg malaria and measles) as these will protect people in the future.



EDUCATION

Christian Aid has funded schools so that children can get an education and increase their chances of being able to find a well paid job when they are older.



CAMPAINING AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Christian Aid is currently campaigning for governments to lower their carbon emissions as a way of preventing climate change.



FAIR TRADE

Christian Aid helped set up the Fair Trade Foundation which seeks to ensure that workers are paid a fair price what they produce.