

Christianity

Christianity began in approximately 33 AD (usually called 'CE' / Common Era by RE teachers and many others). It was started by the followers of Jesus. At the centre of Christianity is the belief that Jesus is the Son of God, God come to earth as a human. The basic beliefs of a Christian can be summed up in the creeds. The two main creeds in Christianity are the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The Trinity: God, three in one

Christianity is a monotheistic religion which teaches that God is one, known in three persons. These are God the Father and creator, Jesus the incarnate son of God, God made flesh, and the Holy Spirit, God working in the world and in human hearts and minds, bringing life. Almost all Christians believe the Trinity is one God working in three different ways, understood as three 'persons' of the Trinity, who exist in mutual love.

Jesus Christ

The Bible tells that Jesus was born more than 20 centuries ago in Bethlehem in Palestine to a woman called Mary, who the Bible says was a virgin. He was an observant Jewish person for his whole life (not a Christian, of course!). The Bible also tells of the visitors at his birth: angels, shepherds and wise men. He grew up in Nazareth, seen as the son of a carpenter, and at the age of about 30 became a preacher, healer and teacher. He was baptised by his cousin John the Baptist and the Bible tells of his temptation by Satan, the devil, in the wilderness. Jesus recruited a group of followers called the disciples – meaning 'followers'. The Bible describes Jesus telling parables and performing healings and other miracles. He taught that the greatest commandment was to 'love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength'. The second greatest commandment was to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. In his early thirties Jesus was crucified by the Roman rulers in Israel: he had many enemies because of his controversial identification with the poor, outcast or unaccepted in his society and the claim that he intended the overthrowing of the ways of the 'scribes and Pharisees' who were leadership groups within the Judaism of his time. Christians believe that three days later he was divinely resurrected. The Biblical gospels tell of many resurrection appearances of Jesus, alive again after he died and before he went to be with his Father in Heaven. Christians believe that because of the love of God, shown when Jesus died, their sins can be forgiven. Belief

The Apostles' Creed: a widely shared and historic statement of belief for Christians

'I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting.
Amen.'

and trust in Jesus as the Son of God will bring the faithful to Heaven when they die, thanks to divine grace.

The Bible

The Christian holy book, or Bible, contains within it many writings or books, 66 books are recognised by all Christians (some extra 'apocryphal' books are included by Catholics and some Orthodox Christians, totalling 72/73), some running to many chapters, others just a page long. A wide range of genres of writing make up the Bible. It is divided into the Old Testament made up of the Jewish scriptures, writings before the time of Jesus, and the New Testament – writings which are concerned with the life of Jesus and his disciples and apostles. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and consists of 39 books (The Catholic Church includes another 7 totalling 46 books). The books include laws, prophecy, psalms, poetry, history and stories. There are 27 books in the New Testament, originally written in Greek. These books contain history, prophecy, gospels and letters. Pretty much all Christians consider the Bible a source of wise teaching and authority but there are different views on how and whether it tells literal truth, spiritual truth or is to be read as an exploration of meaning.

Worship

Christians see themselves as a body of believers, the worldwide 'Church of Christ'. It is the community rather than the building they meet in which is of principal importance. Christians meet regularly on a Sunday (because it is the day Jesus returned from the grave), but during the week in many UK churches there are many other informal prayer meetings and groups that get together to study the Bible or discuss how best to live a Christian life or provide services to the community. Mass is celebrated daily in the Catholic Church, though not in every church (as it depends upon the availability of priests).

Most Christian churches celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus by sharing bread and wine, a symbolic enactment of Jesus' own last supper. This has many different names such as Communion, the Lord's Supper, Eucharist or Mass. Many services also include praying, praising of God through music and singing, listening to the Bible and learning about its meaning and application.

Praying and reading the Bible are not activities confined to Sundays. Many Christians pray and read the Bible every day. The prayers they offer individually and in communal worship include praise of God, confession, thanksgiving and asking for help and guidance from God. The Lord's Prayer or 'Our Father...' is a near universally used prayer for Christians, taught by Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

Denominations

The Christian Church is made up of many and varied churches – it's divided into many different groups commonly known as denominations. There are some different beliefs and ways of worshipping between the denominations, but they all hold some central beliefs. These are a – centrally - belief in the Trinity and the resurrection, that Christians

should live their lives in ways that show a love of God, and that when they die they will go to be with God.

The denominations can be organised into three groups:

- The Orthodox Churches ('Eastern', including Russian, Greek and Coptic Orthodox Churches);
- The Roman Catholic Church (led by the Pope, based at Vatican City);
- The Protestant Churches (these include Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, the United

Reformed Church, Pentecostals, the Salvation Army, the Society of Friends, many African-origin

Christian communities and many others.

- Some 'new church' communities don't wish to be seen as a denomination.

Festivals

The most important festivals for most Christians are Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.

At Christmas, Christians commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The period beginning four Sundays before Christmas, and leading up to Christmas, is called Advent, which means 'coming'. Easter is the time when Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. The 40 days leading up to this are called Lent, when Christians spend time praying and considering the importance of the events at Easter. Holy Week includes Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday (when the Last Supper is commemorated), Good Friday, marking the crucifixion of Jesus, and Easter Sunday where the joy of the resurrection is celebrated. Pentecost is the festival that recalls the time when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples after Jesus had finally ascended into Heaven (see the Acts of the Apostles, chapters 1-2 for the key account of these events).

In the UK

Christianity has been the major religious tradition and community in the UK for perhaps 1500 years, since its arrival with Romans and Celts. Churches, often ancient, can be found in every community. The history and story of Christianity in the UK is important in children's education, and the moral force and spirituality of Christianity continue to be important in Britain. The Church of England has an 'established' relationship with the state – for example, its Bishops have seats in the House of Lords, and every person lives in a 'parish' and can call upon the services of a Church of England priest if they wish it. The Anglican communion also encompasses the Church in Wales and the Scottish Episcopalians. 59% of British people identified themselves in the 2011 Census as Christians, though only about one tenth of that number are active members of churches, attending once a month or more. The %age has fallen in the 2021 census to about 46%. Although the churches have become less influential in the last half a century, Christians still represent the largest religious community in the UK by a long way. There are an estimated 50 000+ Christian congregations – not all have their own building - in the UK, a large number of these – tens of thousands - have begun in the last fifty years.

Christianity: Some 'Dos and Don'ts'

'Dos'

- ☐ Do teach the Christian belief about God as trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, including to primary aged pupils. It is acknowledged to be mysterious, but is at the heart of Christian understandings of God.
- ☐ Do try to present the Christian belief that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. He was not 'half man and half God', or God disguised as a human, or some kind of superman.
- ☐ Do be aware that the term 'Holy Spirit' is the current Christian way of describing the third person of the Trinity. The older term 'Holy Ghost' is infrequent and suggests unhelpful or trivial connections with ghosts.
- ☐ Do help pupils understand that Christianity takes a wide variety of different forms e.g. Catholic, Orthodox, Church of England, Pentecostal, Baptist and also radical, liberal, Evangelical, conservative – and many more. Don't give the impression that all Christians have identical beliefs or practices. They don't.
- ☐ Do organise visits to churches which involve some members of the congregation being present. Visiting an empty building can reinforce the impression some pupils have that churches are a monument to a faith which is no longer relevant to anyone, a kind of museum. Plan visits to more than one church, to teach about the wide diversity of Christian 'forms' in the UK.
- ☐ Do teach global Christianity and Christian diversity. The religion is very diverse, and found in over 200 different nations, with the large scale growth of Christian faith in the global south for the last half century.
- ☐ Do be aware that Christians differ widely in their understanding of the 'bread and wine'. For example, while Catholics refer to the 'real presence' of Christ in the bread and wine of the Mass, using the term 'transubstantiation' others speak of them as symbols used in memory of Jesus' death.

'Don'ts'

- ☐ Don't represent Jesus in Christian belief as being merely a good man, a wise teacher or a prophet. For Christians, Jesus is God incarnate represented by titles like 'the Son of God', 'the Christ', 'the Messiah'.
- ☐ Don't edit out stories of Jesus' life and actions from the study children do: too much RE repeats the Good Samaritan and Prodigal Son but never deals with, for example, stories of controversy in which he was involved, so Jesus appears to be boring and bland. Tell the whole story: include parables, miracles, controversies.
- ☐ Don't avoid difficulties of definitions. For example, the edge of the definition of Christians for some includes restorationist movements like the Jehovah's Witnesses or Latter-day Saints (Mormons), who don't accept the idea of God in Trinity. Share this complex issue with pupils.
- ☐ Don't liken Christian belief in the Crucifixion to beliefs in human sacrifices made to placate a bloodthirsty God. Although described as a sacrifice, the Crucifixion has to be understood in the light of the Christian belief that Jesus is both fully God and fully human; in some sense God himself dies on the Cross to show divine love.
- ☐ Don't neglect the Resurrection as part of the Easter story. However difficult it may seem, the Resurrection and the Crucifixion are inextricably linked and one should not be taught without the other.
- ☐ Don't suggest that Christians worship Mary or the saints. In some denominations, prayers are made to Mary or the saints as intermediaries.
- ☐ Don't use Bible stories as the basis of a topic when their relevance is tenuous e.g. Noah's Ark isn't really relevant to a theme on water, or even animals. It's a story about God's care for the earth, judgement and promise, and about human morality.
- ☐ Don't use archaic language from the 1611 King James Bible when plain language is more comprehensible. Why say 'love thy neighbour'? It presumes the language of Christianity is old fashioned. Use simple child friendly Bible version – there are many to choose from.
- ☐ Don't normalise the practice of one denomination (often this happens with Anglicanism in the UK). The Baptists, Methodists and Pentecostals are all similarly large groups globally. Catholics are the largest group, well over half of world Christians.

Judaism

Judaism is the oldest of three major related monotheistic religions, often called 'Abrahamic' and its origins are 4000 years ago in the time of the Biblical Patriarchs: Abraham, his son Isaac and his son Jacob. The name Judaism is derived from Judah, one of the 12 sons of Jacob.

Three particularly important features and concerns in Judaism:

- belief in one God;
- the Torah;
- the community and their land.

Belief in one God

Most Jews believe in a creator God who made humans in the image of himself. They believe that we cannot know what God looks like and so no visual representation of God will be found in synagogues or homes. Many Jewish people believe the name of God is too sacred to pronounce: some write 'G-d or 'Gd' to avoid the holy name being committed to paper which may be dirtied or thrown away.

The words of the Shema are at the centre of Jewish belief. The opening of the Shema is, 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength.' The emphasis is on the human response to the divine.

The Torah

The contents of the Torah is at the centre of Judaism and it embodies the covenant that Jewish people made with God in which God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and look after his descendants. The teaching in the Torah, which means instruction, contains 613 commandments. The most well-known of these are the Ten Commandments or Ten Words which were given to Moses.

Jews have other important teachings which together make up the Tenakh or written Torah. These are:

- Torah – the five books of Moses;
- Nevi'im – the books of the Prophets;
- Ketuvim – the holy writings.

The initials of each of these, T, N, K, make up the word TeNaKh.

Also important is the Talmud which is known as the oral law: extensive commentary and reflection on the meanings of the Torah and other scriptures collected over many centuries. The Torah is written in Hebrew, and in Orthodox synagogues it is read in Hebrew. The Torah is handwritten on a set of parchment scrolls by a qualified scribe. Scrolls are treated with respect and are dressed in various items – a crown, a breastplate - before being placed in a cupboard, an Ark, in the synagogue. A Torah scroll is covered with a mantle, it has a silver breast plate and is read with a yad or pointer. which is used when reading the scrolls to avoid touching the scroll. Bells or crowns are placed on the

wooden rollers of the scroll. The Ark is situated so that worshippers look towards the holy city of Jerusalem when they are facing it. It takes one year to complete a reading of the Torah and the festival of Simchat Torah celebrates the completion of this annual reading. This festival is full of joy with Torah scrolls processed or danced around the synagogue.

The community and their land

The Jewish identity is very important and at many times this has been a challenge as Jews have faced oppression and persecution. The land of Israel is a holy site for many Jews, wherever they live in the world. Jews believe it was promised to them by God through the promise to Abraham and his descendants. There are many important sites for Jews in Jerusalem, the most important of which is the Western Wall, which formed part of the second temple in Jerusalem two millennia ago.

The family and the wider Jewish community are essential to living a Jewish life. The Kashrut or Jewish food laws may play an important part in the daily lives of Jews, reminding them of their covenant with God. Foods which are fit to be eaten are called kosher. Food which is unfit to be eaten is called treyfah. In order to be kosher only certain types of meat and fish can be eaten and they must be killed in a special way. Meat and dairy products must not be eaten at the same meal and separate kitchen utensils and crockery are used for these different types of food. Several hours must pass after meat has been eaten before dairy can be consumed.

Many Jewish festivals are based around the home as much as the synagogue, showing the importance of the family in Judaism. Each week the Shabbat meal is celebrated at home on a Friday evening. This is followed by a day of rest, a time to worship God.

Festivals

The first 10 days of the Jewish month of Tishrei (which falls in September or October in the Western calendar) are called the Days of Awe and are a time for repentance. Rosh Hashanah falls at the start of these days and Yom Kippur is on the 10th of Tishrei.

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, which is celebrated in September or October. It is a time for thinking about the achievements of the past year and considering plans for the next year. Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. It begins at sunset, ten days after Rosh Hashanah. Many Jews fast for 25 hours. It is vital for Jews to forgive one another for anything they have done wrong before the beginning of Yom Kippur. There are many other festivals, including Pesach (Passover) and Hanukkah (festival of lights).

In the UK

A Jewish population of around $\frac{1}{4}$ of a million in the UK is very much concentrated in London and greater Manchester – where the establishment of Jewish schools can mean that few Jewish children attend community schools. This makes it important for the teacher of RE to take note of local synagogues: there are over 400 in the UK. Visit one with your pupils if you can. You will be welcomed. Virtual visits may still be good – but are second best. The history of the Jewish community in the UK is interesting and an important topic for study. This will include the impact of anti-semitism on the Jewish communities both within the UK and for example from wider Europe in the 1930s and 40s – and up to the present day. But learning about the holocaust in isolation from understanding the wide and deep tradition of Jewish life leaves pupils with distortions in their understanding. Remember: this is RE. Teach pupils about Judaism as a globally influential faith and tradition with about 4000 years of history.

Judaism: Some 'Dos and Don'ts'

'Dos'	'Don'ts'
☐ Do picture the Jewish religion as alive and well in the UK today, as well as attending to the history and global geography of Jewish people. ☐ Do describe the first 39 books of the Bible as being 'the Jewish Bible' or 'the Tenakh'. In a Jewish context, they should not be referred to as the 'Old Testament', which is the Christian term for these books, and can sound negative about Jewish scripture. ☐ Do attempt to describe the joyous nature of Judaism. Fulfilling the mitzvot is important to many Jewish people, but these are not to be seen as a burden but undertaken with sincere intention (kavanah) and often with joy. Many of the 613 mitzvot of the Torah apply not to individuals but to the priesthood or to some part of the community. ☐ Do follow the convention of many Jewish and inter faith writers in their use of BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era) when giving dates. The use of BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini) assumes Christian beliefs in an unhelpful manner when teaching Judaism. ☐ Do be cautious about using the term 'Jews'. The word developed a pejorative tone particularly under the Nazis. Some members of the faith prefer the term 'the Jewish people'. ☐ Do ensure all pupils prepare to cover their heads when visiting a synagogue, and understand this symbol of respect. ☐ Do use the term the 'Western Wall' when referring to the remains of the Temple in Jerusalem. The 'Wailing Wall' might be considered to have negative overtones. ☐ Do study the holocaust in RE, with an emphasis on religious and spiritual questions: e.g. how and why did Jewish people practice the faith under the Nazis? Were some sustained by their faith? What varied impacts on Jewish belief in the Almighty did the holocaust have? How and why do many Jews continue to trust God after the genocide?	☐ Don't equate the teaching of Bible stories with teaching Judaism. RE should also take into account the life, beliefs and practices of those in the Jewish community through history and today. ☐ Don't make use of 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah' with reference to God. The Hebrew letters standing for God, YHWH were never spoken out loud, instead, phrases like 'the Eternal', 'the Holy One', 'King of the Universe' are used. Jewish people often write 'G-d' to avoid using the holy name on, for example, paper which may be discarded. ☐ Don't depict contemporary or historic Judaism as the legalistic, narrow minded Pharisaic form of religion sometimes portrayed in the New Testament (the early Christian depiction of Judaism was not always sympathetic or very accurate: don't rely on it). Let Judaism speak for itself, don't slip into presenting it in relation to Christianity. ☐ Don't suggest that Moses on Sinai received only the Ten Commandments. In Jewish belief Moses was given God's Law, the Torah, containing the 613 commandments (mitzvot). Don't suggest that all Jewish people believe the same things about the Torah. Orthodox teaching say the whole Torah was given on Mount Sinai. More liberal views see it as human-authored but divinely inspired. ☐ Don't confuse the Menorah, the seven branched candelabrum and symbol of Judaism with the Hanukkah, the nine branched candelabrum used at the festival of Hanukkah. ☐ Don't miss the fact that Jewish people live in hundreds of thousands in many countries of the world, but also note that Israel and the USA are where most Jewish people live today. ☐ Don't always or too often see the Jewish religion through the lens of the holocaust. Jewish people presented as victims of Nazi atrocity should not be the main or only encounter pupils have with the religion. ☐ Don't either over-emphasise or ignore the place of anti-semitic persecutions. Instead, let Jewish voices speak for themselves about the faith, the tradition and the persecutions. Enable pupils to connect this to other examples of racism and to explore what justice means.

Islam: the religion of Muslims

Please note: Muhammad is highly respected by Muslims and it is usual for Muslims to say the blessing 'peace be upon him' after his name. In text this is often shortened to 'pbuh'. This expression of respect is also used after the name of other prophets. This sign of respect should be inferred throughout this syllabus.

The word Islam means submission or peace. Muhammad was born in the city of Makkah in 570 CE. Muhammad is not seen as the founder of Islam but rather as the final Prophet, the first of whom was Adam. There are many other prophets mentioned in the Qur'an including Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and Isa (Jesus). Prophet Muhammad is known as 'the seal of the prophets'. He is the Last Prophet.

Muhammad was a trader happily married to his wife, Khadija. At the age of 40 he began experiencing a series of revelations from God. These revelations were delivered by the Angel Jibril or Gabriel over a 23 year period and form the sacred text of the Qur'an. The Quranic text was written down, during the life of the Prophet, although it was compiled as one volume only after his death. The words are regarded as a direct transmission from God Himself. Allah is the Arabic name for God.

Prophet Muhammad and his followers were persecuted in Makkah and eventually migrated to Madinah in 622 CE. This was known as the Hijrah, and became 'Year One' of Islamic calendars. By the time of the Prophet's death in 632 CE, Islam was an established religion in the Arabian peninsula.

The Qur'an and Hadith

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a 23-year period. Muslims seek to show their love and obedience to God by being obedient to the words in the Qur'an and living as closely as possible to the way the Prophet lived. The Qur'an gives guidance on a range of topics about everyday life, ethical, spiritual, social and moral issues. It is treated with reverence, being handled carefully, and ideally read on a daily basis. Children will often learn to read Arabic and recite the Qur'an at an early age. Recitation is important to Muslims: the words of the Quran have a power when spoken that doesn't go with them being read.

The Hadith are a collection of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad. The word Sunnah means 'Way (of the Prophet)', and is the life example of the Prophet as reported in the Hadith. Whereas the Qur'an is seen as the word of God, the Hadith are classified according to various levels of authenticity.

Tawhid

Islam is a monotheistic religion. The concept of Tawhid is the oneness of God. God is more important than everything. God cannot be represented pictorially: any picture would be an inadequate distortion, so Islamic art often uses calligraphy and geometric design to express beauty. The different attributes of God are shown in his 99 beautiful names such as Al-Rahim the most merciful and Al-Hafeez the protector of the weak.

The belief in one God is at the centre of the declaration of faith – the Shahadah.

The Five Pillars of Islam: Shahadah, salah, sawm, za

These provide a structure and a focus for Muslim daily life and worship. Muslims express and uphold their faith by practising these pillars. The Pillars focus belonging, community and worship in relation to time: from daily, to annually, to once in a lifetime, there is a ritual to strengthen the community.

The Shahadah (The declaration of faith)

‘There is no god but the One God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.’

Belief in the oneness of God is the foundation of Islam. The words of the Shahadah form part of the words of the Adhan, which are the first words whispered into the ear of a newborn baby and are also the last words a Muslim will hope to hear before s/he dies.

Salah (Prayer)

The ritual prayers (salah – also referred to as namaz), are offered five times a day. All Muslims are required to pray from the age of about 12. Prayer enables one to develop a closer relationship with God. Prayers are said at specific times of day, (once early in the morning, once in the night and the others dispersed through the day), the times will alter slightly depending on the time of year. At the mosque, Muslims pray in rows behind the Imam, the leader of congregational prayers. Prayer can be carried out anywhere that is clean. Often a prayer mat is used to pray on, but as long as a space is clean it is not essential to use one. Muslims will have to have made Wudhu (ablution), before they pray, so access to water is often useful. Muslims face Makkah (towards South East in the UK) when they pray.

Sawm (Fasting)

Many Muslims fast at various times of the year, but the month of Ramadan (the 9th month in the Islamic calendar) has special religious significance. In this month many adult Muslims fast from dawn until sunset. Fasting involves refraining from eating, drinking, smoking (and other bad habits) and sexual relations. Ramadan is an opportunity to increase one’s God consciousness ‘taqwa’, it is regarded as a time of spiritual discipline that contributes to spiritual growth. There is also a sense of identifying with the poor and encouraging Muslims to give to the weak and needy. There are exemptions to fasting, for example, for pregnant women, the sick and the elderly, but they must try and make up the time at a later date.

Zakah (Almsgiving)

Muslims are required to give, annually, 2.5 per cent of their savings. This is distributed among the poor and needy. This simple starting point is more complex in practice, where different kinds of wealth attract different levels of Zakah. One impact of the practice of Zakah is that a British charity such as Islamic Relief has an income from donations of over £120 million in a year, used for development work across the world.

Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah)

Pilgrimage to Makkah is an obligatory act of worship for those who can afford it and are physically able. Muslims should try to complete the Hajj once in their lifetime. The pilgrimage takes place in the last month of the Islamic calendar Dhul-Hijjah. During the Pilgrimage, Muslims are required to dress simply, focus on worshipping God and be careful not to argue or lose their temper. This is called being in 'Ihram'. As everyone, rich and poor, black and white, are required to dress in the same way and perform the same rituals, Hajj symbolises simplicity, equality, the cosmopolitan nature of the world in one place, and the unity of humanity.

Festivals

Two very important festivals are Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Adha. Id-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of the fast of Ramadan. This is a time to ask for forgiveness, thank God for everything He has blessed the believer with and share in congregational prayers. Special food is prepared and shared with family and friends. Presents are given and new clothes are often bought. This is also a time when Muslims will visit the cemetery and remember dead family and friends. Id-ul-Adha celebrates the devotion shown to God by his Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son Isma'il. God ordered that a lamb was sacrificed instead of Isma'il and so this festival is about devotion to God. In keeping with this practice of Abraham, animals are sacrificed and distributed to family, neighbours, and the poor, or money is given to charities who will ensure a sacrifice is made and given to the poor on your behalf.

In the UK:

The Muslim communities of the UK have grown rapidly in recent decades, and now number well over 3 million people, 6.3% of the population roughly one in eighteen. Most of these people are British born Muslims. Over 2200 mosques (many of them just converted houses or other premises) provide for Muslim worship and community association in the UK.

Islam: Some 'Dos and Don'ts'

'Dos'	'Don'ts'
❑ Do teach pupils about the origin and spread of Islam as a world religion: the second largest on the planet, a religion that means 'peace'. ❑ Do use original Islamic materials such as stories of the Prophet and sayings from the Qur'an and Sunnah wherever possible. ❑ Do store a Qur'an carefully if you keep it in school, ideally wrapped and placed on a high shelf away from dirt and danger and, when showing it to pupils, use a Qur'an stand to hold it. Model respect and you will teach respect. ❑ Do be cautious about asking Muslim children to do certain forms of artwork. Patterns, buildings, natural forms and landscapes are usually acceptable but representing animals or humans may not be. Never ask them to 'draw God'. No image of Allah is allowed in Islam – it would be too far from the truth. ❑ Do stress the important cultural and intellectual contributions many Muslims have made in fields such as science, mathematics, language, medicine, astronomy etc. ❑ Do prepare pupils before exposing them to recordings of the Call to Prayer or recitations of readings from the Qur'an. They may be beautiful, but strange to untrained Western ears. ❑ Do be careful about references to pigs or pork with Muslim pupils, who may be taught that pigs are unclean animals, to be avoided in all forms. ❑ Do be careful of photos of Shi'ite Muslims commemorating the martyrdom of Hussein. Participants sometimes cut themselves, which appears gruesome and detracts from the reasons behind it. ❑ Do prepare pupils before visiting a mosque, modest dress rules apply to all: check with the mosque for local requirements about such things as head covering, modest dress, removing shoes, sitting with feet pointing towards the Mihrab, in other words towards Makkah, and brief your pupils about the requirements of respectful visitors. ❑ Do choose pictures of Muslims praying carefully; show a variety of different positions, not simply 'rear views'. ❑ Do engage thoughtfully with the negative and Islamophobic portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the UK's media, perhaps relying on academic work and accurate statistics to challenge and confront assumptions and prejudices which can be misleading or even a form of racism.	❑ Don't describe Muhammad as 'the founder of Islam'. Muslims believe he is the last and final Prophet of Islam but that their faith preceded him and goes back through a long chain of Prophets to Adam and the beginnings of human kind, created by Allah. ❑ Don't refer to Allah as 'the Muslim God'. Muslims believe Abraham, Moses and Jesus worshipped the same God. 'Allah' is the Arabic word for 'God'. There are '99 Beautiful Names' for God in Islam – but Allah is not one of them. ❑ Don't imply that Muslims are 'all the same'. Major communities of Sunni or Shi'a Muslims and smaller groups which are in some ways 'on the edge' of institutional Islam are all represented in the UK – and possibly in your classrooms. In unity, there is diversity. ❑ Don't use the archaic terms 'Muhammadanism' or 'Muhammadan'; these suggest devotion to Muhammad rather than submission to God. It's outdated – challenge this term if you hear it. Use 'Islam' and 'Muslims' instead. ❑ Don't touch a Qur'an (or Arabic extract) with dirty hands, place it on a floor or dirty surface, put things on top of it or leave it open on a stand as an exhibit. Modelling respect for Muslim ideas of the sacred is good RE practice. If these observances can't be kept, better to not have a Qur'an in the classroom. ❑ Don't portray Muhammad or one of his Companions, in drama or role play or use illustrations which claim to show Muhammad or his Companions either in outline or with faces blanked out as in some forms of Persian art. ❑ Don't liken Wudu to Christian Baptism. It is a practical and ritual preparation for prayer, not a ritual marking initiation as in Christianity. ❑ Don't say Muhammad 'fled' from Makkah to Madinah as it suggests cowardice. He left as part of an organised 'emigration'. In general Muslims avoid attributing negative emotions to the Prophet. ❑ Don't dwell on historical differences or conflicts which resulted in bloodshed e.g. the crusades. To what extent some of these were religiously motivated is debatable. ❑ Don't allow pupils to think that killing a sheep or goat at Id-ul-Adha is a sacrifice to a bloodthirsty God. It is a reminder of the story of Abraham and Isma'il. The killing of an animal results in a sacrifice of generosity which feeds many. ❑ Don't ever equate Islam with terrorism and violence. Try to help pupils understand the Islamic meaning of 'Jihad'. The greater Jihad refers to striving along a spiritual path. The lesser Jihad refers to using agreed force to defend Islam against attack. It must be a last resort.