

Glossary : Christian worldview traditions

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Adam

DEFINITION: The first human being, according to Genesis – a book in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Advent

The four Sundays leading up to Christmas. This means coming or arrival, and it is a time of preparation, reflection and prayer leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus

The season leading up to Christmas. The word comes from Latin and means arrival.

Advent Calendar

DEFINITION: A calendar with one door for the 24 days leading up to Christmas day. Traditionally, behind each door there would be a picture of part of the story of the birth of Jesus and a Bible quote. Nowadays, Advent Calendars are much more varied, from chocolate to coffee, beauty to beer, and have little to do with the Christian preparation for Christmas.

Advent candle

DEFINITION: Advent wreaths are made up of five candles, one for each Sunday of Advent and one which is only lit on Christmas day. Some families have an advent candle that is marked out with the 24 days leading up to Christmas day. They light the candle for a short time each day as they prepare to mark the birth of Jesus.

Agape

DEFINITION: Self-sacrificial or unconditional love, particularly for the weak and vulnerable. This is not to be confused with romantic love. This originally referred to the common meal of the first Christians: a Love Feast. People demonstrate agape when they forgive someone for the wrongs they have done against them, or when they do without something in order to give to other people.

Altar

DEFINITION: A term used by some traditions to refer to a table where the bread and wine are blessed during Holy communion.

Angel

DEFINITION: A spiritual being who is seen as a messenger between God and Human beings. In the Bible, there are stories of angels delivering messages, such as telling the shepherds of the birth of Jesus.

Annunciation

DEFINITION: An announcement, usually used to reference the announcement by the Angel Gabriel to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the Gospel of Luke in the New Testament.

Apostle

DEFINITION: It comes from the Greek for 'One who is sent out'. In the Bible, this refers to the twelve people who were sent out by Jesus to share the gospel.

Ascension

DEFINITION: Many Christians believe that 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead, his resurrection, he went up to Heaven to reside with God.

Ash Wednesday

DEFINITION: The first day of Lent. Some Christians, for example, Roman Catholics, receive ashes on their forehead in the shape of a cross. The ashes are made from the palm crosses from the previous year.

Atonement

DEFINITION: The idea of being at-one. Most Christians believe that the death of Jesus, as a sacrifice for the things that humans have done wrong (sins), makes God and Humans 'at one' again after their separation at the 'Fall'.

Baptism

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Christening, Believer baptism, Adult baptism

DEFINITION: A ceremony of belonging and commitment, an initiation rite for Christians. Water is used to symbolise the washing away of sins. For babies and younger people,

this is done at the font. For infant baptism, godparents are chosen to oversee the spiritual life of the young person into adulthood. For other Christians, baptism happens when the person is old enough to make a decision for themselves. Adult baptism usually involves full immersion of a person into a body of water, either a baptistery or pool in a church, or perhaps a river or lake.

Baptist

DEFINITION: A protestant denomination that practices believer baptism.

Bethlehem

DEFINITION: A small town in Palestine where Jesus was born.

Bible

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Holy Bible, Scriptures

DEFINITION: The Christian Holy book, which is made up of two main parts: the Old Testament, which contains stories of the prophets, law, psalms and writings of the Jewish people, and the New Testament, containing the gospels, letters and writings about Jesus and the first Christians. The Old Testament has almost identical contents as the Hebrew Bible, used by Jews. The New Testament is a collection of 27 books, placed after the Old Testament in most Christian Bibles.

Bishop

In the Anglican Church and Roman Catholic Church, bishops are the senior religious leaders governing an area, known as a diocese, and are tasked with guiding, teaching and looking out for the spiritual lives of those in the diocese. They also support the clergy and perform ordinations and confirmations. In England, some Bishops sit in the

House of Lords. Other denominations also have bishops, and their role varies between denominations.

Carols

DEFINITION: Religious songs, particularly associated with celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Chalice

DEFINITION: A cup used in some churches to hold the wine during Holy Communion.

Christian

DEFINITION: A person who follows the Christian worldview.

Christianity

DEFINITION: The religious worldview of Christians. The name comes from the word Christ which means Messiah ('anointed one'). Christianity is made up of many denominations, and each emphasise different aspects of belief and practice though almost all denominations follow the teachings of Jesus and use the Bible as their sacred text.

Christingle

A celebration that happens during December or early January as part of Christmas. It became popular in the UK in the 1960s to raise funds for the Children's society but has its roots in Moravian Christianity.

During the service, children receive an orange, representing the world, wrapped in a red ribbon, representing the love and blood of Jesus. The orange has 4 cocktail sticks with sweets on them, representing the sweetness and goodness of God, or the fruits of the earth. At the centre of the orange, is a candle representing Jesus as the Light of the world. The candles are lit during the service.

Christmas

DEFINITION: A festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ. It is celebrated on the 25th of December in most Western Churches but in some Orthodox traditions, it is celebrated on the 6th of January.

Church

DEFINITION: The whole community of Christians but also the building in which Christians worship.

Church of England, Church in Wales, Church of Scotland, Church of Ireland

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: CofE, CofW, CofS, CofI

DEFINITION: The official Anglican church in each of the four nations of the United Kingdom. The Archbishop of Canterbury, currently Archbishop Sarah Mullally, the first woman to hold the role, leads these churches as their senior priest.

Confirmation

DEFINITION: When a person who has been baptised, usually as a baby, confirms the promises about their belief in God which were made on their behalf. This is done in most churches when people are old enough to understand the promise being made. In the Anglican and Roman Catholic tradition, the bishop oversees the service.

Congregation

DEFINITION: A group of people who congregate together to worship

Creation

DEFINITION: The action or process of God bringing the universe into existence. This also refers to the bringing into existence of the human being, which is why humans are described as being 'made in God's image' in the Bible. There are various interpretations of the creation stories in Genesis by different Christians. Some believe it is a literal description, whereas other Christians believe that the Bible is inspired by God, and so question meanings of the words, such as the concept of a day. Some other Christians consider this story to be a metaphor and so can accept scientific explanations for the origins of the universe.

Creed

DEFINITION: A short statement of Christian beliefs, for example, the Apostles creed or the Nicene creed. These are often said in services by the congregation, affirming their shared beliefs.

Cross

DEFINITION: A symbol of the resurrection of Jesus. These can be found in churches, and some Christians wear them on chains around their necks. They can also be a focus of worship.

Crucifix

DEFINITION: A cross, showing Jesus being crucified. These can be found in churches, and some Christians wear them on chains around their necks. They can also be a focus of worship.

Crucifixion

DEFINITION: A Roman method of executing people by nailing them to a cross and leaving them until they died. This was the way that Jesus was killed on the hill of Golgotha.

Denomination

DEFINITION: A branch of the Christian Church, e.g. Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Non-conformists, Orthodox, Quakers, Roman Catholic etc... There are many denominations of the Christian church, but they share a lot of similar beliefs about God and Jesus.

Devil

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Satan

DEFINITION: A figure used to represent evil. Some believe that he was a fallen angel.

Disciple

DEFINITION: The 12 original followers of Jesus: Simon Peter, James (son of Zebedee), John, Andrew, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon and Judas.

Easter

DEFINITION: An annual festival that celebrates Christian belief in the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection, when he rose from the dead, according to the Bible. At Easter time, many Christians sing hymns and songs that celebrate the belief that God

brought Jesus back to life after his death by crucifixion. There are often sunrise services on Easter Sunday or vigils on Easter Saturday night.

Easter Sunday

The day that the gospels say that Jesus came back to life from the dead. There are often sunrise services on Easter Sunday, and it is a day of joy, hope and celebration.

Sharing of chocolate Easter eggs is popular amongst Christians and many with different worldviews.

Ecumenical

DEFINITION: Dialogue between people from different denominations.

Eschatology

DEFINITION: Ideas relating to the end times of the world, life after death and Judgement.

Eternal

DEFINITION: Christians believe that God created time and is not limited by it. God is outside time and therefore, God does not get old like human beings.

Evangelist

DEFINITION: A person who tells people about teachings of Jesus.

Eve

DEFINITION: The second human being, according to Genesis, a book in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Fall

DEFINITION: The change that took place when human beings lost their state of innocence by disobeying God. In the story (found in Genesis – the first book of the Bible), God tells Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of a particular tree, but they are tempted to disobey him by a snake. They eat, and so the paradise that God created is spoiled forever. For Christians, when Adam and Eve fell from their state of innocence, they brought sin into the world. Since then, all human beings (apart from Jesus) have been unable to live a perfect, moral life. The phrase ‘the Fall’ is not found in the Bible itself but is used by Christians and found in popular culture, such as art and literature.

Font

DEFINITION: A receptacle holding water, which, in some church traditions, is used in the sacrament of baptism. These vary in design, from small wooden bowls to large stone vessels on a pillar near the door of the church.

Forgiveness

DEFINITION: A conscious decision to let go of or pardon a person for something that they have done wrong. A key belief of Christians, is that they should offer forgiveness, just as they believe God does for them.

Frankincense

DEFINITION: A gift given by the Magi or wise men who appeared after the birth of Jesus. Frankincense was a symbol of divinity.

Garden of Gethsemane

DEFINITION: The place where Jesus prayed on the night before he was crucified.

Genesis

DEFINITION: The first book of the Bible, containing stories such as, the 6 days of creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Noah and Abraham and others.

God

DEFINITION: Most Christians consider God to be an all loving, all powerful being, the creator of the whole universe and everything in it. Christians believe there is only one God and that humans can have a relationship with him through prayer and worship. For most Christians, God is three 'persons' in one: the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. This is called 'The Trinity'.

Gold

DEFINITION: A gift given by the Magi or wise men who appeared after the birth of Jesus. Gold signified kingliness.

Golgotha

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Calvary

DEFINITION: The place where Jesus died, also known as the Calvary.

Good Friday

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Holy Friday, Great Friday

DEFINITION: The day on which, according to the gospels, Jesus was crucified and the day he died. This is marked in different ways by different Christians. Some hold a service at 3pm when Jesus is said to have died. Others hold a service where they make their way around the stations of the cross, remembering the final journey of Jesus. Traditionally, hot cross buns, spiced buns with a cross on top, are eaten on this day in the United Kingdom.

Gospel

DEFINITION: The story of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, told in the first four books of the New Testament: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word 'Gospel' is Greek for "Good News". For most Christians, the "good news" of the Gospels is the belief that people can be saved from the consequences of sin through their faith in Jesus Christ.

Grace

DEFINITION: Many Christians believe God loves them unconditionally, even though they fail to live up to his commands.

Harvest festival

DEFINITION: Christians often hold harvest festival services in the autumn to thank God for the food that has been harvested. Traditionally, food is brought as a donation and shared with those who need it.

Heaven

DEFINITION: A physical place, or a state of mind, associated with God and the afterlife.

Holy Communion

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Mass, Eucharist, Lord's Supper

DEFINITION: A Christian service of thanksgiving where the death and resurrection of Jesus are remembered, using bread and wine to represent or actually become his body and blood. Many Christians celebrate the Holy Communion/ Eucharist/Mass at Church on Sundays, but the service can take place at any time.

Holy Spirit

DEFINITION: A guide for Christians, part of the Holy Trinity. Many Christians talk about the Holy Spirit as a giver of comfort and strength and as God's presence in the world today.

Holy week

DEFINITION: The week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday when Christians remember the last days, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is marked by special services and events. Easter gardens, showing the cross and the tomb are sometimes created outside or inside churches during Holy week.

Host

DEFINITION: A term used by some traditions to refer to the bread or wafer that has been consecrated and blessed and is used in Holy communion.

Hymn

DEFINITION: A song of praise to God.

Icon

DEFINITION: Sacred images that show Jesus, or other key people from Christianity, such as saints. They are beautifully decorated with gold and rich colours and are often painted on wood. They are painted by an iconographer who prays and fasts before painting the icon. They are used within Orthodox Christian worship as a window into the divine.

Immanent

DEFINITION: The idea that God is active and intervenes in the world, for example, by giving answer to prayer, or performing miraculous acts.

Immanuel

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Emmanuel

DEFINITION: This word comes from a prophecy about the birth of the messiah in the book of Isaiah. It means 'God is with us'.

Incarnation

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Incarnation

DEFINITION: This literally means 'to become flesh' or 'to be given a body' and for Christians, it describes what happened when God was born as a human being called Jesus. This is why he is sometimes called 'The Son of God'. For most Christians, Jesus is believed to be the second person of the Trinity: 'truly God and truly human', because he is the incarnation of God.

Intercession

DEFINITION: Praying for someone or a place that is facing difficulty or tragedy, or illness, or unrest.

Jesus

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Jesus Christ, Yeshua, Christ

DEFINITION: Almost all Christians believe that he is the Son of God. For Christians, Jesus is the 'Christ' – the one sent by God to save people from the consequences of the

things they did wrong. Most Christians see him as the Messiah, which is used in Judaism to refer to the expected leader sent by God, who will bring salvation to God's people. Jesus' followers applied this title to him, and its Greek equivalent, Christ, is where we get the words 'Christian' and 'Christianity'.

John the Baptist

DEFINITION: A prophet, who spent much of his life living in the wilderness, and according to the gospels, he 'prepared the way for Jesus'. He baptised Jesus in the River Jordan.

Joseph

The husband of Mary, who, according to the gospels, gave birth to Jesus. He was a carpenter and brought up Jesus with Mary. There are other Josephs that feature in the Bible, for example, in the New Testament, Joseph of Arimathea, who was said to have paid for the tomb for Jesus' body. In the Old Testament, there are also Josephs, but perhaps the most well-known is Joseph in Genesis who was the son of Jacob and Rachel, who saved people through his wise management of resources. He is known by many because of the musical: Joseph and his amazing technicoloured dream coat.

Kingdom of God

DEFINITION: In the Gospels, Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God as something that is within everyone. For some Christians, it represents God's ideal for human life in the world – a life following Jesus' example, in a world where God rules. For Christians, the Kingdom of God might also be something that happens in the future, when everything is transformed and people live in a new state of peace and harmony.

Last supper

DEFINITION: The meal eaten on the night before the crucifixion of Jesus. This was a Passover meal as it was Pesach, Passover, at the time. At the meal that Jesus had with his disciples, he gave them bread and wine, symbolising his body and blood. This now forms the centre of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, which is an important part of worship for many Christians.

Lectern

DEFINITION: A place where the Bible can be read from. Sometimes, these are plain wood but they can also be decorated in the shape of an eagle, symbolising John, the evangelist.

Lent

DEFINITION: This is a period of 40 days leading up to Easter, during which many Christians 'give up' certain luxuries, abstain from certain foods or drink (fasting) or engage in a time of study, prayer and 'saying sorry' for what they have done wrong in the

previous year. During Lent, Christians remember the sacrifice of Jesus, especially in the week before Easter itself, as well as the 40 days and nights he spent fasting in the desert before he began to preach his message and perform miracles.

Liturgy

DEFINITION: The structure of worship in a church service, often including set prayers, words and readings.

Lord's Prayer

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Our Father

DEFINITION: A prayer which Jesus taught to his disciples. There are several slightly different wordings of this that are used in different churches, but all the same key parts are included. It is referred to as the Our Father by Roman Catholics. It is used regularly in services of Worship by most denominations.

Magi

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Wise Men, Three Kings

DEFINITION: According to the Gospel of Matthew, this refers to wise people, guided from the East by a star to find Jesus, the 'King of the Jews'. They brought with them three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Mary

DEFINITION: According to the Bible, Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ. Known as the Virgin Mary or Mary, Mother of God and venerated by Catholic Christians in particular, who believe she can intercede for them and believe that she provides a model of how to live. There are other Marys that feature in the Bible, for example, Mary Magdalene, a follower of Jesus, who waited at the foot of the cross when he was crucified and was one of the first said to have seen him when he was resurrected, according to the Gospels of Mark and John.

Maundy Thursday

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Holy Thursday, Thursday of the Lords supper, Sheer Thursday

DEFINITION: The day on which the last supper happened and that, according to the Gospels, Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane and was arrested.

Messiah

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Christ

DEFINITION: The literal meaning is 'anointed one'. This is the promised saviour for Jews, for whom they are still waiting for and for Christians, Jesus was the Messiah.

Methodist

DEFINITION: A protestant denomination, started by John Wesley in the 18th century. Their worship has a focus on the preaching of the Bible, which can be seen by the large pulpits found in many Methodist churches.

Minister

DEFINITION: A leader in some Protestant denominations, such as Methodism.

Miracle

DEFINITION: An act considered to be caused by God that is against the laws of science.

Myrrh

DEFINITION: A gift given by the Magi or wise men who appeared after the birth of Jesus. Myrrh was a sign of death, as it is used as an oil when preparing a dead body.

Nativity

DEFINITION: The birth stories of Jesus, found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

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Nave

DEFINITION: A term used by some traditions to refer to the central part of the church where the congregation sit.

New Testament

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: NT

DEFINITION: The second part of the Bible, which tells of the birth, life and teachings of Jesus, stories of the disciples and apostles, and other followers of Jesus. The word 'testament' means agreement or statement of belief.

Old Testament

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: OT

DEFINITION: The first part of the Christian sacred text: the Bible. This relates to the period before the birth of Jesus. It has almost identical contents to the Hebrew Bible, used by Jews, and contains, for example, stories of the prophets, laws, psalms and writings of the Jewish people. The word 'testament' means agreement or statement of belief.

Omnibenevolent

DEFINITION: The belief that God is all-loving.

Omnipotent

DEFINITION: The belief that God is all- powerful.

Omnipresent

DEFINITION: The belief that God is present in all places at all times.

Omniscient

DEFINITION: The belief that God knows all things.

Ordination

DEFINITION: The term used when someone becomes a priest or a minister.

Orthodox

DEFINITION: The word Orthodox means 'right believing'. It is one of the three main branches of Christianity, the others being Roman Catholic and Protestant. It is distinctive through, for example, its use of icons in worship.

Palm cross

DEFINITION: A cross made of palm leaves given out to Christians on Palm Sunday, as a reminder of the events of the Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Passion Sunday, Hosanna Sunday

DEFINITION: The gospels report that Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, and that people waved palm branches to welcome him and shouted Hosanna, which means 'save us'. On Palm Sunday, which is the beginning of Holy week, palm crosses are given out as a reminder of this event.

Parables

DEFINITION: Stories with a moral, spiritual, theological or ethical message. Parables were told by Jesus, such as the Prodigal Son, The Good Samaritan or the Lost Sheep.

Passion play

DEFINITION: A tradition that comes from medieval times where the events of Holy week are re-enacted.

Paten

DEFINITION: A term used by some traditions to refer to a plate used to place the bread or wafers on, during Holy communion.

Paul

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Saul, St Paul

DEFINITION: Known as St Paul, and formally known as Saul. As Saul, he was known for persecuting Christians. According to the Book of Acts in the New Testament, he converted to Christianity on the road to Damascus and became an evangelist. The book of Acts documents his travels, as well as the many letters he wrote to different communities, for example, Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians.

Pentecost

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Whitsun, WhitSunday

DEFINITION: Fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they were instructed to go out and share the 'good news' of Jesus. It is considered by some to be the birthday of the church.

Pope

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Bishop of Rome, Holy Father

DEFINITION: He is the head of the Roman Catholic church and also acts as the Bishop of Rome. The current Pope, Pope Leo XIV, was elected Pope in May 2025.

Prayer

DEFINITION: Communicating with God. Prayer, for Christians, can be part of a religious service or just something people do whenever they want to 'talk with God'. There are many sorts of prayer, for example, asking for things for oneself or others, offering thanks, requesting guidance, confessing sins and praising God. A useful acronym to remember the different types of prayer is ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication (asking for things).

Priest

DEFINITION: The person who has been ordained, usually licensed by the bishop, to offer sacraments, such as the Eucharist. For many denominations, this can be a man or a woman, but for some individual churches and denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, this can only be a man.

Prodigal son

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Lost Son

DEFINITION: The key character in a parable told by Jesus. The younger son asks for his inheritance early, spends it unwisely and eventually comes home and is welcomed by his father. One meaning of this parable for Christians, is that God forgives people who repent and that God is joyful when someone comes back to him.

Psalms

DEFINITION: A sacred poetic prayer or songs of praise, lament, wisdom or thankfulness which can be found in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible.

Pulpit

DEFINITION: A raised platform at the front of a church, from where the sermon will be preached.

Purgatory

DEFINITION: A place where some Christians, particularly Roman Catholic Christians, believe that people's souls reside and are purified before going to heaven.

Quakers

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Friends

DEFINITION: A colloquial name used for members of the Religious Society of Friends. This movement began in the 17th Century. Worship meetings are often silent, with people standing up to speak if they feel it is right to do so. Quakers are pacifists and, have for centuries, been involved in movements for social justice. Some Quakers will consider themselves to be Christians, but others will not.

Reconciliation

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Confession

DEFINITION: One of the seven sacraments for Roman Catholics, and also important for some from the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the church. A person tells the Priest their sins and then receives advice, which includes something that they can do to make amends which is called a penitence. The Priest will then absolve their sins. This is now more commonly called reconciliation rather than confession.

Repentance

DEFINITION: Showing you are sorry for the wrong things that you have done.

Resurrection

DEFINITION: The Christian belief that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, after the crucifixion. It can also mean the rising from the dead of believers on the Last Day of the world or the new, risen, life of Christians. In the New Testament, Jesus is reported to have performed several resurrection miracles, including the raising of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, according to John's Gospel.

Roman Catholic

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Catholic

DEFINITION: The group of Christians headed by the Pope. Originally, Christians in Western Europe were all part of Roman Catholicism until the reformation.

Sacrament

DEFINITION: A religious ceremony that is believed to provide believers with visible signs of inward spiritual grace, such as baptism. In the Roman Catholic Church, there are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance (saying sorry for sins), Anointing of the sick, Matrimony (marriage) and Holy Orders (becoming a priest). For Protestant Christians, baptism and the Eucharist are sacraments.

Salvation

DEFINITION: This literally means 'rescue'. Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection have rescued them from the consequences of sin, and, through forgiveness, restored the relationship with God that had been broken at the Fall. For Christians, all human beings have a 'sinful' nature. Salvation means that they can be 'rescued' from the things that sin leads to. Many Christians see Jesus as the rescuer, the sacrifice of his life at crucifixion took away the sins of people and there was a reconciliation between God and humanity. Christians believe this means that they can gain eternal life through God's forgiveness of their sins.

Samaritan

DEFINITION: A person who came from Samaria, now part of Israel. Samaritans and Jews did not usually get along.

Sanctuary

DEFINITION: A term used by some traditions to refer to the area around the altar of the church.

Sermon

DEFINITION: A talk that is a form of teaching given during a Christian worship service. It is often, but not always, delivered by the Priest or leader of the church.

Sermon on the mount

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Sermon on the Mount

DEFINITION: Teachings by Jesus that included the Lord's prayer and the Beatitudes, a series of blessings, such as 'Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God'.

Shrove Tuesday

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Pancake Day, Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), Fastnacht

DEFINITION: The last day before lent begins. A day when traditionally the last of the rich food is eaten. Some Christians go to church to confess their sins. It is also known by some as pancake day. In some countries it is 'mardi gras', a celebration before the marking of lent.

Sin

DEFINITION: In Christianity, this usually refers to an act of disobedience or rebellion against God. More broadly, it refers to the sinful human condition. Christians believe that people are far from perfect, do bad things, and are in need of transformation. To Christians, the sinful nature leads only to death, but by believing in Jesus, and admitting what one has done wrong, one can be forgiven.

Soul

DEFINITION: The part of a human being that many believe is eternal.

Stations of the cross

ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS: Stations of the Cross

DEFINITION: A series of 12 or 14 stops, portrayed in pictures, that show the events of the last hours of the life of Jesus, from the trial, to his burial. In some churches, particularly the Roman Catholic church, these are used to reflect on the trials of Jesus on Good Friday.

Stewardship

DEFINITION: Caring for something on the behalf of someone else. Many Christians believe they are called to be stewards of the world.

Stoup

DEFINITION: A small basin containing Holy water, which Christians use to make the sign of the cross. This is most commonly found in Roman Catholic churches.

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Transubstantiation

DEFINITION: The belief that during the liturgy of the Holy communion, the bread and wine, take on the presence of Jesus Christ. This is a belief held by Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics and some within the Anglican tradition. Consubstantiation is the belief that the bread and wine are not transformed, but are symbolic of Jesus' body and blood, holding his spiritual presence.

Trinity

DEFINITION: 'Tri' means three and unity means one, so the word trinity means three in one. For most Christians, the trinity is an important belief. God is one but exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Vicar

DEFINITION: A person who is an ordained Priest and leads/ pastors a community of worshippers.