

Key end points for this unit:

- Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal and the state religion of Rome.
- In the Middle Ages, Catholic Church had become the richest institution in Europe.
- During the Renaissance, a revolution in the world of science created a conflict between the Church and science.
- Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the world, with more than 2 billion followers.
- The various groups or branches within Christianity are referred to as denominations. It can be broadly split into three branches: Catholic, Protestant and (Eastern) Orthodox.

This unit will directly follow on from the Year 4 unit of Christianity and the Bible. It will also build on units that touch on the context of Christianity such as Year 2 teachings of Jesus. Using both Biblical and historical perspective, this unit explores the beginning of Christianity from the life of Jesus to early Christianity, based on the writings from the Bible, the letters of Paul which were written beginning in 50 CE and are the earliest surviving Christian texts. It then looks at how Christianity has spread and grown over the last 2000 years. The Year 2 History PKC unit on the Tudors will also provide a foundational support of knowledge for key concepts in this unit such as the English reformation. Children should have prior knowledge of Christianity starting in Judea under Roman rule. Children should also be aware from year 4 that Emperor Constantine made Christianity legal in Rome.

This unit builds on prior knowledge to help children understand how Christianity developed from its origins to the present day. Lessons are taught chronologically, beginning with the life of Jesus and moving through periods of Roman persecution, medieval conflict, the Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution. Children will complete a timeline to show Christianity's progression as their final assessment. To support this, they should be encouraged to take notes in each lesson, helping them track key events and reduce cognitive load during the assessment. It would be helpful to make it clear to pupils that each lesson builds toward this timeline, forming a narrative of Christianity's growth over time.

As in all RE units, children will have regular opportunities to reflect personally on what they learn. Teachers will foster a respectful classroom environment that encourages children to express different viewpoints, regardless of religious background. Every pupil is invited to think critically and share their thoughts in a safe space.

Children will explore key Christian ideas and consider how they relate to their own experiences. They'll reflect on:

- Times they've felt motivated to act on a belief
- Messages they would share with others, inspired by Jesus' example
- How they might challenge or improve rules they disagree with, linked to the Reformation
- Their views on rights and responsibilities in the modern world

Lesson sequence

Lesson 1 will revisit the historical context of the world Jesus lived in during the start of Christianity. Children will have prior knowledge of this from Year 4 Christianity and the Bible as well as Year 2 the timeline of Jesus unit. It is important teachers are mindful that the Christian and Jewish perspective of the life and teachings of Jesus at this time may differ. In Judaism it is believed that Jesus lived as a teacher and to some a false prophet at this time, whereas in Christianity he is considered the son of God and saviour to all of humanity. Teachers should make clear both, Romans and Jews lived before the birth of Jesus, his following and teaching caused conflict between the (new) Christians and other religions and the time.

Lesson 2 will build on lesson 1, looking more closely at the growth of Christianity in the early centuries. Children will learn that Christianity initially began as a movement initially classified as a Jewish sect and Peter and Paul spread Jesus' message through the Roman Empire. Children will have a brief understanding of the growth of Christianity in the Roman Empire, where Constantine made Christianity legal and the state religion of Rome from Year 4 Christianity and the Bible unit.

In lesson 3 children will revisit the development of Christianity during the Middle Ages. Children would have briefly looked at the split between the Eastern (Roman – Byzantine empire) and Western Churches (Pope in Rome). In this lesson, children will delve deeper into the history of the separation and conflict. The separation of the churches in East and West led to the Pope becoming extremely powerful in the west which resulted in the initial Holy wars. In the 7th century, the Holy Land (Jerusalem\) was part of the Islamic Empire. There were four major holy wars where the Holy Land swung back and forth between Muslim and Christian control. It is important for teachers to be mindful that this could be a source of tension for either Muslims, Christians and Jews within the class given the current conflict in modern day Palestine and Isreal. Teachers should only stick to presenting historical facts through the lens of the grown of Christianity over time.

In lesson 4 Children will revisit a very familiar concept of the Reformation. Children will have prior knowledge of this is studying PKC History (Year 2). The history of the reformation will be covered in this lesson, looking more closely at the figures that influenced it as well as focus on the development of Christianity. Children will have prior knowledge of Protestantism and Catholicism through the RE curriculum as branches of faith as well as the PKC history curriculum. Children will learn, that through the rule of the Pope in the Western Church in the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had become the richest institution in Europe. This eventually led to the English reformation and the break with Rome away from the Catholic church in England.

Lesson 5 look at how scientific revolution had an influence on Christianity today. During the Renaissance, a revolution in the world of science created a conflict between the Church and science. The conflict existed because the scientific ideas were seen to contradict with Church teachings. Key scientific figures such as Isaac Newton and Galileo began using science to explain elements of the universe only the Bible had given reason for before. Children will learn, that although scientific theories were initially seen as a direct contradiction to God's way in Christianity, others believed it to be further explanation for God's creation.

Lesson 6 This assessment lesson will begin by looking at Christianity as the most practised religion in the world today. Children will be able to contextualise their learning throughout the unit by looking at the current state of Christianity in today's world. Children should then use their notes and knowledge from this unit to create their own timeline from what they recall of the development of Christianity from the Birth of Jesus to the current day. Allow children to use their knowledge organiser to and previous lesson content to build their timelines.

The key concepts: scientific revolution, Big Bang theory, renaissance

Key terms: persecution, Middle Ages, Catholic, Pope, Martin Luther, Holy wars, reformation, Protestant