

SALVATION

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What is salvation?
- Why is it important to Christians?
- What is the role of Jesus Christ in salvation?

INTRODUCTION

In this session we will investigate the concept of salvation and answer the key questions, before moving on to tackle an exam style question.

The dictionary definition of salvation is 'being saved from danger, loss or harm'.

What's that got to do with Christianity? Quite a lot, actually. In fact, salvation is central to the Christian faith. Until you understand salvation you cannot hope to understand Christianity. Here goes...

CONSIDER

1. Have you ever watched a film or TV programme where someone does something stupid and ends up in trouble? Then someone else comes along, the 'saviour', and, well...saves them. Sometimes this is at great expense to themselves – they sacrifice a treasured object, a dream or even their life to save that person. And we all feel sad because that person didn't deserve it. They didn't do the stupid thing that got the other person into trouble. So annoying...

Well, that's a bit like salvation for Christians. Only in this story, we're the person who does something stupid and gets into trouble. So, who is going to save us? The answer is Jesus.

BREAK IT DOWN...

God hates sin. There are consequences to sin: we become separated from God. We've all sinned, therefore, we are all separated from God. God didn't want this to happen, so he sent Jesus to save us from this separation.

To get your head around this we need to rewind to the Old Testament days. The people would make sacrifices as an atonement for their sins, to make amends for all the bad stuff they'd done. This would bring them back into a relationship with God again.

But they would go back to sinning again and again. God got fed up with this and, as He loved us so much and wanted to be close to us, He sent Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice. No one need make sacrifices ever again. It was done. Finished. All we have to do is repent – say sorry for our sins – and ta-dah! We're close to God again.

You can read more about this at

<https://request.org.uk/jesus/death-and-resurrection/salvation/>

The 'something stupid' = *sin*

The 'trouble' = *separation from God*

The 'saviour' = *Jesus, who hadn't done anything wrong*

TASK

Read 'Break it down...' on the previous page and then, in your own words, explain what salvation is.

2. Look at the image below, then answer the questions.



- The bridge is made up of the name Jesus. Why is this? What do you think the bridge represents?
 - Who does the person represent running across the bridge?
 - Who do you think is on the other side of the bridge?
 - What would happen if the bridge wasn't there?
 - Why is this image a good representation of salvation?
 - In your own words, explain why salvation is important to Christians.
3. Your exam board will want you to show you understand salvation. But you may need to refer to Christian teachings about salvation from sources of wisdom and authority.

Let's take a look at what the Bible and another important source, The Nicene Creed, says about salvation...

"God did not choose us to suffer his anger, but to possess salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us in order that we might live together with him, whether we are alive or dead when he comes."

1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

"For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it."

Ephesians 2:8-9

We believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the Father before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
he became incarnate by the
Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried.
The third day he rose again,
according to the Scriptures.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Extract from The Nicene Creed

“Salvation is to be found through him alone; in all the world there is no one else whom God has given who can save us.”

Acts 4:12

“God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: 23 everyone has sinned and is far away from God’s saving presence. 24 But by the free gift of God’s grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free.”

Romans 3:22-24

TASK

- What information does the Nicene Creed give us about Jesus?
- Read each Bible extract. Explain what each one tells us about salvation.
- Which of these extracts do you think is the most helpful in understanding salvation? Why?

4. Exam Questions

There are a number of exam boards across the UK. You should attempt the question which relates to your exam board, because each of them has their own terminology and guidance on how to answer. If you aren’t sure which is your exam board, contact your teacher to ask.

These questions are ‘evaluation’ questions; they carry the most marks on an exam paper.

WJEC EDUQAS

'Salvation is the most important belief for Christians.'

Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. Refer to religion and belief. (15 marks)

PEARSON EDEXCEL

'Salvation is the most important belief for Christians.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. (15 marks)

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

AQA

'Salvation is the most important belief for Christians.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against. (12 marks)

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support the statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

OCR

'Salvation is the most important belief for Christians.'

Discuss this statement. (15 marks)

- Analyse and evaluate the importance of points of view, referring to common and divergent views within Christianity
- Refer to sources of wisdom and authority.

SQA - N5

'Salvation is the most important belief for Christians.'

How far do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (8 marks)

When answering any evaluation question, you need to add stuff which supports the statement (FOR) and stuff which supports other ideas (AGAINST).

Here, you are writing about the importance of salvation to Christians. You can use what you've learned from this session when arguing FOR the statement. But you need to have some different ideas when arguing AGAINST the statement.

What other things are important to Christians?

These will get you started:

- Love
- Helping the poor
- Forgiveness
- Evangelism

Can you add more to this list?

And don't forget to say whether you agree or disagree with the statement (and why) at the end!