

## Diversity of Christianity

All the things you never knew about the diversity of Christianity...

The Catholic Church is the oldest church, and the one with the most followers. Catholic priests must be celibate for life, and the head of the Church is, of course, the Pope.

All Catholic worship centres around the sacraments, which are necessary to receive God's grace and to achieve salvation. That's why in the churches you'll always find a confession box and a sanctuary, where the Eucharist or Holy Communion is performed.

In the sanctuary there's a tabernacle which holds the bread and wine. Once they've been consecrated, Catholics believe that they become Christ's body and blood – that's transubstantiation.

Catholic churches are usually ornate, and if you want statues of saints, well you're in the right place, because in the Catholic tradition saints can be asked to mediate between humanity and Heaven.

The Anglican Church broke away from the Catholic Church over 500 years ago. It was set up by King Henry VIII.

Why?

Because he'd had an argument with the Pope.

The original Anglican Church was of course the Church of England, but there are many other Anglican churches around the world, including the Church in Wales. Together, they all form the Anglican Communion.

There are a number of key differences between Anglicanism and Catholicism, such as Anglican vicars are allowed to get married. And you won't find any saints in most Anglican churches, because Anglicans don't believe in praying to saints.

No confession boxes in the churches, because Anglicans only have two sacraments – Eucharist and Baptism. And no tabernacle either, because they don't believe in transubstantiation.

Let's not forget that for Anglicans, the sacraments aren't necessary for saving souls. Any salvation can happen directly between a person and God, which brings us to the non-conformist churches.

They broke away from the Anglican Church, and they're a wide group containing different churches, with different beliefs and styles of worship.

# Bitesize

One thing they've all got in common though is that they're all Protestant – and that's a fact.

The non-conformist tradition means plain churches, often known as chapels, because they believe in emulating Jesus's life of simplicity. No bling then, just uncomfortable seats.

Baptists, as the name suggests, find baptism rather important, but not for babies – only adults are considered ready to consciously receive God's grace in this way.

Quakers really do like to keep things minimal. They don't have churches, they meet in simple spaces, and they don't have priests or services. They sit together, and people speak if they feel moved to.

So, of course, there are many ways to be a Christian, and this is just a small selection of traditions, with many more churches around the world.

What do they all have in common?

That's right – Jesus Christ and the Bible.