

The Bible

The **New Testament** has the same number of books for all denominations (27). The number of books of the **Old Testament** is different for different Christian groups. This is because Orthodox Churches accept all the 2nd Temple literature (51 books) , Catholics accept some (46 books) and Protestants don't accept any (39 books) . The books are based on the following themes:

Laws (e.g. Exodus), History (e.g. Kings), Writing, (e.g. Psalms) Prophets (e.g. Isaiah) , Gospels (e.g. Mark), Letters (e.g. Hebrews), Revelations (e.g. Revelations).

What is the Bible? The Bible is the inspired word of God and the main source of guidance for Christians. It contains Gods laws on how to live a Christian life and receive salvation.

There are three different ways to interpret the Bible:

- **Fundamentalist:** believe that the Bible is the literal word of God so cannot be wrong. They believe God gave the message to the Bible writers who wrote down what God dictated to them.
- **Conservative:** believe the Bible is the word of God, written by man. The Bible writers were guided by the Holy Spirit, so the message is God's but humans wrote it so it needs interpreting by the Church to help people understand them.
- **Liberal:** believe that the Bible was written by man about God, trying to understand his message. This means that the Bible can be have mistakes and contradictions , but what matters are the great truths about God that the Bible contains.

Why is the Bible important? How is it a source of guidance for Christians? Why does it have authority?

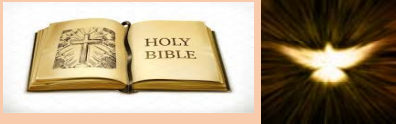
B - Bible

R - Reveals God

I - Inspired by the Holy Spirit

L - Laws of Moses

L - life of Jesus.



Remember that you need to be able to refer to sources of Wisdom and Authority. The sources for this unit are overleaf.

The Magisterium

The Magisterium is when the Pope and bishops interpret the Bible for today. Their task is to define the teachings of the Bible for twenty-first century Catholics. There are three types of Magisterium:

- **Ordinary Magisterium:** this is when the Church teaches what has always been taught.
- **Conciliar Magisterium:** this is when the Pope calls a general council to decide teachings (e.g. Vatican II)
- **Pontifical Magisterium:** this is when the Pope uses Papal infallibility (his authority on religious matters) to decide a doctrine (e.g. Pope Pius XII declared the assumption of Virgin Mary.

Why is it important? (UGS)

- addresses issues that didn't happen in the time of Jesus.
- keeps the teachings of the Church up to date.
- provides clear guidelines on what to believe and how to behave in the modern world.
- it is the supreme authority of the church as it is led by the Pope.

Apostolic Tradition and Apostolic succession

Apostolic Tradition: The Church believes that the **Gospel message of Jesus was handed on in the Apostolic tradition** as well as the Bible. Jesus instructed the Apostles to start the Church and carry on his message. The message was passed down from the Apostles to the first Christians. This is called the Apostolic Tradition.



Why is the Apostolic Tradition important?

- It gives the Church the authority of Jesus.
- It means that the teachings of the Church are the teachings of Jesus.

Apostolic Succession: Jesus gave St Peter the authority to lead the Church . This authority was passed down to the first bishops. When they died it was passed on to the next bishops, who passed on to the next ones . This continued from the beginning of the church all the way through until today. It means the Pope and the Bishops have the same authority as the Apostles.

Why is it important?

- It means that the teachings of the church are unchanged teachings of Jesus.
- It means that the pope has the same authority as St Peter.

GCSE Religious Studies
Unit 1.3 Sources of Wisdom & Authority

The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) was a meeting called by Pope John Paul XXIII of all the bishops to decide how the Church could be brought up to date and bring the leadership closer to the people. It was needed because the world was changing so quickly and had been ravaged by the horrors of WWII. The Council produced 4 documents.:

The Sacred Council (**Sacrosanctum Concilium**). This proposed **changes to worship**. A new simpler mass was introduced containing more of the Bible in the language of the people rather than Latin. Priest could face people during mass and the laity were allowed to read Bible readings.

The Light of Humanity (**Lumen Gentium**). This proposed **changes to the nature of the Church**. The Church would be seen not as a pyramid with the Pope at the top but a circle, with the Pope & bishops holding it together. Everyday Christians were called to serve Christ (the Common priesthood).

Joy & Hope (**Gaudium et Spes**). This **addressed the whole world**. It affirmed the human rights and dignity of all people and claimed that peace and justice were necessary for all.

The Word of God (**Dei Verbum**). This said that the **Bible should be read in the language of the people** and that and that it should be read as symbolic truth and the teachings applied to people lives.



Sources of ethical decision making

The example of Jesus: Catholics look at the life of Jesus to see what he would have done. Jesus' teaching, is summed up as the '**Golden Rule**' which states 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'. Christian believe Jesus fulfilled the Laws of Moses in the New Law of Christ, summed up at the Sermon on the Mount.

Natural Law: Is the moral order designed by God at the creation. So that if people work in harmony with natural law, they will be living as they should. Humans can use their God given reason to work out what natural law is e.g. marriage between a man and a women is natural order as they can create children, which carries on the human race.

Conscience: The church teaches that the voice of conscience is the voice of God. Therefore Christian should follow it. When making moral decisions. It will generally guide them to making the right choices.

Implications: Many of the issues today are not mentioned in the Bible e.g contraception or abortion. Some Christians may use their conscience to make decisions about same-sex marriage or supply condoms to AIDS sufferers.

Body of Christ:

The Body of Christ is the Church continuing God's work on earth today. Christians are united with one another and Christ, through baptism, making them part of Christ's body. All Catholics receive the Body of Christ in the Mass, which joins them with other Christians. Just as parts of the human body are independent so are the different parts of the Church, none is more important and all are equal.

St Paul described the Church as like a human body. As one part cannot say the another part "I don't need you". So the Church cannot say to different members "I don't need you".

Why is it important?

- it is how the Church is described in the Bible and Catechism.
- it means that the Church carry's on Christ's work today.
- it that all Christians are united with each other and Christ.

The Four Marks of the Church

In the Nicene Creed it says '*the Church is one, holy, catholic and Apostolic*'.

One—the church is one Church that recognises one baptism. It follows the teaching of one God and one saviour.

Holy—the Bible is the word of God and its teachings are from God, making them holy.

Catholic— The word catholic means universal or worldwide. This is because the message of Jesus if for everybody and everybody can receive salvation.

Apostolic—The Church is Apostolic because the Church was founded by the Apostles and the bishops today are successors of the Apostles through Apostolic Succession.

Mary is a Model of the Church because: she is the mother of Jesus and she is a mother to believers and mother of the Church.

Mary is a model of discipleship: she obeyed God's orders for her, she was the immaculate conception, and lived a sinless life.

Mary example of faith: she believed angel Gabriel at the Annunciation and believed Jesus was the Messiah before he performed miracles.

Mary example of charity: She prays for those in need, interceding for Christians and she was present at Jesus death.

Mary is important because: she is the Immaculate Conception, so was born sin free; she gave birth to Jesus and obeyed God; she is the Mediatrix, who intercedes for Christians and she is a role model to Christians.

	Topic	Quote/Reference	Source
1	The Bible	God is the author of scripture, so the Bible teaches God's truth.	Catechism
2	Interpretation of the Bible	All scripture is inspired by God.	St Paul
3	Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium	The task of interpreting the Bible has been entrusted to the Magisterium.	Catechism
4	Vatican II	Mass in the vernacular—Sacrosanctum Concilium Catholic encouraged to read the Bible –Dei Verbum	Sacrosanctum Concilium/Dei Verbum
5	Church as the Body of Christ	Although there are many Christians, we are all one body in Christ.	St Paul
6	Four marks of the Church	"I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."	Nicene creed
7	Mary	Because of her obedience to God, Mary is a model of faith and charity.	Catechism
8	Personal and ethical decision making	Natural law enables people to see by reason the difference between right and wrong.	Catechism