

Name: _____

Date: _____

Christianity

Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus. Jesus lived about 2000 years ago on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea in the Roman province of Judea. Most Christians believe Jesus to be both a man and the son of the God of the Jews. Almost two billion Christians live on every continent. Christians comprise the majority of people living in North and South America, Latin America, Europe and Australia. Additionally, Christianity is the religious faith of almost half of the people of Africa. Christianity is a dominant force on every populated continent but Asia.

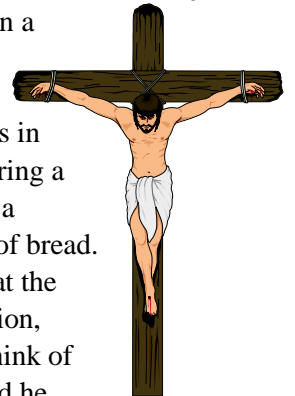
Our calendar numbers the years from the birth of Jesus, but many scholars now believe Jesus was born about 4BCE. Jesus began to minister at about the age of thirty. Jesus was a Jew, but his teachings sometimes did not agree with Jewish tradition. Jesus called on his followers to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." As Jesus developed a popular following, both the religious leaders and the Roman governor saw him as a threat to their power. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, ordered Jesus to be crucified. Crucifixion is an ancient and painful method of execution in which a condemned person is tied or nailed to a wooden cross and left to hang until dead. Today the cross is Christianity's most important icon. A cross is found at the top of most Christian churches. Some Christians wear a cross as a necklace. The cross symbolizes a Christian's connection with Jesus.

The followers of Jesus called him Christ. Christ is a Greek word that means, "chosen one." In time, the followers of Jesus became known as Christians. Some years after his death, a group of Christians combined the stories of the life and wisdom of Jesus into four books known as the Gospels. Gospel means "good news." The holy book of Christianity, the Bible, is composed of two sections. The Old Testament consists of the sacred writings of the Jewish people, and was written mostly in Hebrew long before Jesus lived. The New Testament of the Bible includes the Gospels, along with letters by Christian writers. The Bible has been translated into more than 1,500 languages and has

been read by more people than any other book.

About half of the world's Christian population is Roman Catholic. Pope Benedict XVI is the leader of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic is a Latin word that means "universal," and at one time almost all Christians followed the teachings of the Pope. Roman refers to the fact that the Pope has lived in Rome for over five hundred years. Most Christians in Eastern Europe belong to Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Eastern Orthodox churches split with the Roman church in the Middle Ages. Many European leaders, including Martin Luther, John Calvin and King Henry VIII of England, protested against the Pope in a period known as the Reformation. In addition to Roman Catholicism, Christian sects in America today include Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Mormons and Episcopalians.

Christian holy periods include Christmas, the birth of Jesus; Easter, when Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven; and Lent, a forty-day holy period of penitence and self-denial. Christians generally worship in churches led by ministers and priests. Most Christians practice acts of religious significance called sacraments. The sacraments include baptism, when a Christian joins the church and confirmation, when a Christian confirms his or her faith. The Eucharist is the holiest of Christian sacraments in many Christian churches. During a religious service, members of a church will eat a small wafer of bread. Christian tradition states that at the Last Supper before his execution, Jesus asked his followers to think of the meal as the body and blood he would soon sacrifice.



Answer in complete sentences

- *1. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"?

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Fill in the Blanks

Christianity is based on the t_a_h_n_s of J_s_s, who lived in the R_m_n province of J_d_a about two t_o_s_nd years ago. Jesus taught his followers to “D_ unto o_h_rs as y_ would have t_ do unto y_.” The f_l_w_rs of J_ called him C_r_st, a G_e_k word that means ‘c_o_en one.’

The f_l_o_e_s of J_s_s compiled stories of the his l_ and w_s_om in f_ books known as the G_s_e_s. The Gospels are part of the N_ Testament of the Christian Bible. The Torah, the sacred writing of the J_w_sh people, comprise the O_ Testament of the Christian B_b_e. The B_ has been t_a_s_a_ed into more than 1,500 l_n_u_g_s and has been r_ by more people than any other b_.

There are almost two b_ Christians around the *w_, comprising the m_j_r_ty of people in North and South A_e_i_a, Europe, and A_. Almost half of the people of A_r_ca are Christians. Asia is the only populated c_n_i_e_t without a strong Christian presence.

About half of the world’s C_r_s_i_ns follow the teachings of the pope. These Christians call themselves C_t_o_i_s. Catholic means “universal.” Most Christians in Eastern E_r_pe belong to Eastern O_t_o_ox Churches, while *W_s_e_n European leaders such as Martin L_t_er, John C_l_in and King H_n_y VIII of E_g_a_d formed Christian sects that p_o_e_t_d the t_a_h_n_s of the P_.

More than three in four Americans describe themselves as Christian. In addition to R_m_n Catholicism, major Christian sects include B_p_i_ts, M_t_o_i_ts, L_t_e_a_s, P_e_b_t_r_a_s, P_n_a_o_t_ls, M_r_o_s and E_i_c_p_l_a_s.

Most Christians worship in c_u_c_es led by a m_n_s_e_s or p_i_s_s. Most Christians practice acts of religious significance called s_c_a_e_ts. Christians *c_l_b_a_e the b_r_h of J_s_s on Christmas. They also celebrate E_s_er, when many Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead and a_c_n_ed to h_a_en.

Answer in complete sentences

2. Why are the followers of Jesus called *Christians*?

3. What are the Gospels?

4. How does the New Testament of the Christian Bible differ from the Old Testament?

5. Why is Christianity’s most important icon a cross?

*Higher order question, any reasonable answer will be accepted.

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