



## GCSE Religious Studies Crucial Knowledge Glossary – Paper 1

### Buddhism

#### Anatta

Belief that there is no fixed self/no soul; one of the Three Marks of Existence.

#### Anicca

Impermanence. Belief that nothing is permanent; one of the Three Marks of Existence.

#### Arhat

A perfected person. In Theravada Buddhism this is a term for a person who has become enlightened.

#### Ascetic

A life free from worldly pleasures, and involves giving up of material possessions. An ascetic life often has the aim of pursuing religious and spiritual goals.

#### Bodhisattva

In Mahayana Buddhism this is a being destined for enlightenment, who postpones their final escape from samsara in order to help living beings.

#### Buddha

- Historically the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama)
- An awakened or enlightened person.

#### Buddhahood

Reaching enlightenment.

#### Buddha-nature

In Mahayana Buddhism this refers to the fundamental nature of all beings, which means that all beings can become enlightened/reach Buddhahood.

#### Buddha rupa

An image or statue of the historical Buddha or a being believed to have attained Buddhahood.

#### Chanting

Singing or rhythmic repetition of a word, prayer or sound.

#### Compassion (Karuna)

Sympathy and concern for the suffering of others; a key part of Buddhist ethics.



### Concentration

Focusing one's attention; an important part of meditation and mindfulness of breathing.

### Consciousness

The fifth of the Five Aggregates; the state of being aware of something/your surroundings before or without perception.

### Craving (tanha)

The ongoing state of desire which causes suffering; grasping at things we enjoy/want.

### Dependent arising (Paticcasamupada)

The belief that everything exists because other things do; everything is interconnected and everyone affects everyone else.

### Dhamma (Dharma)

The teachings of the Buddha; these are the ultimate truth. Can also refer to following the Buddhist path (following the dharma).

### Dhammapada

A source of wisdom and authority; part of the Pali Canon that includes some of the most famous teachings of the Buddha, including the Eightfold Path.

### Dukkha

Suffering. Belief that all life includes suffering and unsatisfactoriness; one of the Three Marks of Existence.

### The Eightfold Path (magga)

The fourth Noble Truth. Known as 'The Middle Way,' it includes the way to wisdom; mental training and the way of morality. Eight stages to be practised simultaneously.

### Energy

One of the Mahayanan six perfections; making a courageous effort to attain enlightenment.

### Enlightenment

A state of wisdom that enables total clarity and understanding of the truths of existence; achieving Enlightenment (Buddhahood) allows a being to be freed from the cycle of rebirth.

### Ethics (Sila)

Moral principles that inform behaviour and attitudes; part of the Eightfold Path.



### The Five Aggregates (skandhas)

The belief that human beings are composed of five factors - form, sensation, perception, mental formation, consciousness.

### The five moral precepts

An important part of Buddhist ethics; part of the Eightfold Path (right action). These include: not taking life, not taking things which aren't freely given, not misusing the sense, not speaking falsehoods, not clouding the mind with intoxicants.

### Form

The first of the Five Aggregates; matter, physical experiences through the sense organs.

### The Four Noble Truths

An important part of the Buddha's teachings found in the Pali Canon, explaining the truth about existence. These include: suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, the path to the end of suffering.

### The Four Sights

Teaching from the Jataka Tales about Siddhartha Gautama's experience of illness, old age, death and a holy man. These sights led him to give up his life of luxury, to follow an ascetic lifestyle, in search of the truth about suffering.

### Generosity

One of the Mahayanan six perfections; the sincere and selfless desire to benefit others with no expectation of reward.

### Gompa

Tibetan monasteries associated with learning and studying the dharma.

### Greed

One of the Three Poisons; the attachment to material things, and the ongoing selfish desire for more.

### Hate

One of the Three Poisons; a feeling of intense dislike, anger, wishing others harm.

### Ignorance

One of the Three Poisons; the inability to see things as they really are. It is like a veil that prevents us seeing/understanding the truth of dukkha, anicca and anatta.

### Intoxicants

Substances that cloud the mind, e.g. alcohol, drugs. The five moral precepts teach against using these.



### Kamma (Karma)

Literally 'action.' The belief in cause and effect, intentions and actions will affect the future.

### Loving kindness (metta)

A pure love which is selfless and not possessive; a key part of Buddhist ethics.

### Mantra recitation

A short sequence of words or syllables chanted repetitively as a form of meditation.

### Mahayana

Literally "Greater Vehicle"; this school of Buddhism focuses on achieving enlightenment for the sake of all beings (Bodhisattva). It is the main school of Buddhism in China, Tibet and Japan.

### Malas

Strings of beads used as a prayer aid.

### Mental formations

The fourth of the Five Aggregates; mental activities which lead a person to actions and produce kamma (karma).

### Meditation

A spiritual experience that opens a person up to the highest state of consciousness; one of the Mahayanan six perfections, and part of the Eightfold Path (Samadhi).

### Mindfulness of breathing

A form of meditation found in Theravada, Zen and Tibetan Buddhism. It focuses on the practice of breathing.

### Monasteries (viharas)

Buildings that house monks and nuns. They may also have shrines, Buddha rupas, and spaces for study, as well as accommodation.

### Morality

Principles or beliefs about what is right and wrong. One of the Mahayanan six perfections; includes following the Five Moral Precepts.

### Nibbana/Nirvana

Literally 'blowing' out. The belief that individuals can achieve a state of perfect peace where they experience liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

### Parinirvana Day

A festival in Mahayana Buddhism that celebrates the death of the Buddha and his attainment of final nibbana. It is most often celebrated on 15th February.



### Patience

Being able to tolerate delay or problems without becoming agitated or anxious. One of the Mahayanian six perfections.

### Perception

The third of the Five Aggregates. The ability to distinguish between different objects that we experience through our senses; it also enables memory.

### Puja/devotional ritual

The name given to ceremonies that involve meditation, prayer and offerings.

### Pure Land

This is the dominant form of Buddhism in Japan and focuses on chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha.

### Rebirth

This refers to the belief that when a being dies they are reborn. This process depends on kamma, and will continue until nibbana is attained.

### Retreats

Temporarily leaving one's everyday life and going to special places to aid spiritual development.

### Samatha

Concentration and tranquillity. A method of meditation; a state of calmness.

### Sensation

The second of the Five Aggregates; the feelings that arise from our sense organs making contact with objects.

### Shrine

A room or part of a room which contains a Buddha rupa, candles, an incense burner and sometimes other offerings.

### The six perfections

Ethical principles in Mahayana Buddhism to lead a being to enlightenment.

### Sunyata

Literally 'emptiness'. Mahayana belief about the absence of an intrinsic nature or self-identity.

### Temple

A structure/building for religious or spiritual activities, such as meditation. Will usually contain a shrine(s).



### Theravada

The school of Buddhism mainly found in Sri Lanka and Thailand; it is an older tradition than Mahayana.

### The Threefold Way

The three divisions of the Eightfold Path: ethics, meditation and wisdom.

### The Three Marks of Existence

The belief that all life involves/is marked by these three features; sometimes known as the Three Universal Truths. The three are: dukkha, anicca, anatta.

### The Three Poisons

Causes of dukkha that affect all beings: ignorance, greed and hate.

### Tranquillity

A state of peace and calm.

### Vipassana (insight)

A method of meditation focused on insight into the true nature of things.

### Visualisation

Forming a mental image. A method of meditation in Mahayana Buddhism, imagining an image of a Buddha or Bodhisattva and focusing on their qualities.

### Wesak

A Buddhist festival celebrating the Buddha's birth. For some Buddhists it also celebrates his enlightenment and death.

### Wisdom (panna)

Insight into the true nature of reality. One of the Mahayanan six perfections, which includes the realisation of sunyata.

### Zazen

The main form of meditation in Zen Buddhism, practiced cross-legged with the aim of gaining vipassana (insight).

### Zen

A Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism. It focuses on the value of meditation and intuition rather than ritual worship and study of the scriptures.



## Christianity

### Ascension

Going or being taken up; the event forty days after the resurrection when Jesus returned to glory in heaven.

### Atonement

Making amends or payment for a wrong. The belief that reconciliation between God and humanity that was brought about by the death of Jesus as a sacrifice.

### Baptism

The sacrament through which people become members of the Church. It involves the use of water as a symbol of the washing away of sin.

### Believers' baptism

Initiation into the Church, by immersion in water, of people old enough to understand the ceremony/rite and who have made the decision to live a Christian life.

### Bible

Source of wisdom and authority; a holy book containing both the Old and New Testaments.

### Catholic

The tradition within the Christian Church which is led by the Pope; also called the Roman Catholic Church. (Note: The term 'catholic' refers to the communion of all Christians, the universal Church, although it is not a term included on this specification).

### Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)

A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

### Christ

Literally means 'Anointed One' in Greek; the Hebrew equivalent is Messiah. The leader promised by God to the Jews; Christians believe Jesus to be the Christ.

### Christian Aid

A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

### Christmas

The festival/celebration to remember the birth of Jesus.



## Church

- The People of God/Body of Christ, among whom Christ is beloved to be present and active.
- Members of a particular Christian denomination/tradition, e.g. Roman Catholic, Methodist.
- A building in which Christians worship.

## Creation

Bringing the world into existence; the belief that the world is God's loving creation.

## Crucifixion

The death of Jesus; a form of the death penalty used by the Romans.

## Easter

Festival/celebration of the resurrection of Jesus; the Easter season ends with Pentecost (50 days after Easter Sunday) which remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit to earth following the ascension.

## Eucharist/Holy Communion

Literally 'thanksgiving'; a sacrament in which the death and resurrection of Jesus are celebrated, using bread and wine.

## Evangelism

Preaching the gospel (the good news about God) to convert people to the Christian faith.

## Evil

The opposite of good; a cause of suffering and against the will of God.

## The Father

The first Person of the Trinity, the belief in God as creator and sustainer of the universe.

## Food banks

Places in local communities where people in need can go to collect food; often run/supported by local churches and religious charities.

## Grace

The unconditional and generous love that God shows to people who do not deserve it.

## Heaven

Belief that after death Christians can enter a state of being with God for eternity.

## Hell

Belief in a place of eternal suffering, or a state after death of being in separation from God.





### Holy Spirit

The third Person of the Trinity; believed to be present with believers since Pentecost and active on earth.

### Incarnation

Literally 'in flesh', or 'enfleshed;' belief that God took on human form in the person of Jesus.

### Infant baptism

Sacrament of initiation of babies and young children into the Church.

### Informal prayer

Spontaneous prayers spoken from the heart which are personal and unique to the person/people at the time.

### Iona

Place of pilgrimage founded by St Columba in the fourth century.

### Jesus

Believed by Christians to be the Son of God, he was a first century Jewish teacher living and travelling in Palestine/Israel.

### Judgement

The belief that God will decide whether each person should receive eternal life or eternal punishment based on their earthly life.

### Just

Fair or equal treatment, a state of justice. Belief about the nature of God as treating all people justly.

### Liturgical worship

A church service which follows a set structure or ritual.

### Law

Rules or commands which must be followed; the law of God is revealed in the Bible.

### Lourdes

Place of pilgrimage where the Virgin Mary appeared to St Bernadette in a series of visions and it is claimed that miraculous healings have taken place.

### Lord's Prayer

The prayer taught to the disciples by Jesus; also known as the 'Our Father' and widely said by Christians in both church services and privately.

### Mission

Literally 'sent out'; the duty of Christians to spread the gospel (the good news about Jesus).



### Non-liturgical worship/informal worship

A service which does not follow a set text or ritual; sometimes spontaneous or charismatic.

### Omnipotent

The belief that God is 'all powerful'.

### The Oneness of God

The belief that God is one singular divine being (who can be manifest in the Three Persons of the Trinity).

### Original sin

Belief human nature is flawed, and that we all have the tendency to sin; traditional belief held by some Christians that this came from Adam & Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit as recorded in Genesis 3.

### Orthodox

A denomination/tradition of the Church popular in some parts of Eastern Europe. There are two main Orthodox Churches – Greek and Russian.

### Persecution

Facing hostility and ill-treatment; some Christians face punishment and death for practising their faith.

### Pilgrimage

A religious journey to a holy site/sacred place, it is an act of worship and devotion.

### Prayer

Communicating with God through words of praise, thanksgiving or confession, or requests for his help or guidance; listening to and speaking to God.

### Private worship

A believer giving God praise and worship on their own.

### Protestant

Christian denominations in which authority is generally based on the Bible, rather than Church tradition/teaching. (e.g. Anglican, Methodist, Baptist).

### Reconciliation

Making up and rebuilding relationships between two groups/sides after disagreement.

### Resurrection

- Being raised from the dead; the event three days after the crucifixion when it is believed that God raised Jesus from the dead.
- The form that many Christians believe the afterlife will take, referring to either physical or spiritual bodies.



### Sacrament

The outward and visible sign of an invisible and spiritual grace. (e.g. Baptism and the Eucharist are recognised as sacraments by most Christians).

### Salvation

Being saved; belief that through God's grace, Jesus' death and resurrection brought about salvation for humanity. Saving of the soul and being able to enter eternal life in heaven.

### Set prayers

These are prayers written throughout the centuries which many Christians worldwide use (e.g. The Lord's Prayer).

### Sin

Behaviour which is against God's laws and wishes/against Christian principles of morality.

### The Son

The second Person of the Trinity; Jesus believed to be God incarnate.

### Son of God

A title used for Jesus; the second Person of the Trinity. Shows the special relationship between Jesus and God.

### Street pastors

A Christian organisation involving people working, mainly at night, on city streets giving care to those who need it.

### Suffering

An effect of evil; undergoing pain and hardship.

### Tearfund

A Christian charity that provides emergency and long-term aid to the developing world.

### Trinity

The belief that God as One includes God also being manifest in three Persons: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### Word

In the Bible, John 1 describes God creating the world through his eternal Word. This links the eternal Word to Jesus in the statement: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

### Worship

Showing adoration and reverence; offering praise to God.