

Christianity (Assembly) – myfishbites.com

Christianity

There are many belief systems in the world. There are various religions and people who say they don't have any faith. But many people would argue that not believing in God is a faith as it takes a lot of faith to believe in it!

So what is unique about Christianity? What difference does it make and why should I care anyway? There are lots of reasons! No matter what you believe, have a listen and a think anyway!

Powerpoint



[Click for the Powerpoint \(3 slides, plus images separately\) –zip folder](#)

The Massive Difference Christianity Makes Worldwide

Did you know that Christianity is the world's largest group that cares for the poor, helps the orphans and the widows, helps bring justice to the genuinely oppressed. It's the largest provider of children's services worldwide, biggest youth work provider and as a single group has the most hospitals, hospices, nurseries and care for older people? The church provides debt counselling, marriage counselling, work to help people escape poverty, has cutting edge prison projects, rescues sex trafficked children and adults, goes into dangerous places to help, is the largest aid agency in the world by far, works with the police to bring order to the streets of city centres and helps cut crime in troubled estates and projects.

The church provides church services for children, marriages, events and funerals. Across the world, Christians pray for people who are ill and sick – with thousands and thousands of people healed each year – and even a major study by people who didn't believe in God finding that prayers for healing worked!

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Christianity has provided much of the basis in the Western world for social housing, care for the vulnerable, improved conditions for prisoners to help them, better healthcare, has been the basis for the legal system and laws, has provided the basis for scientific pioneers who believed God created the universe.

A few years back, a detailed Chinese government study looked at why countries like America had prospered, unlike China previously. The reason they found was unexpected to them – it was the principles and practice of Christianity. We see something similar today in Ethiopia where 25% of the nation are Christian and Ethiopia is prospering, unlike many nations nearby. There are also places (for example in Colombia) where the Christian influence has seen prisons shut and society completely changed for the better.

Christianity was also the basis for the founding of America as Christians escaped persecution from Europe. According to original historical documents, of the 250 men considered as the 'Founding Fathers' of America, nearly all were either Christians or strong believers in the Christian message and Bible. 29 of the 56 who signed the American Declaration of Independence had what were the equivalent of Bible degrees.

Despite what some people may say, the truth is that Christianity is a huge force for good. It's made some mistakes but haven't we all? But the Christian message is not one of violence or killing (this is against the nature of Christianity), despite some wrong things done in the name of Christianity – and which Christians have publicly apologised for.

Christianity is not about forcing people to believe anything. It's a force that sees millions of people's lives changed each year around the world and one that brings hope and good into the world. Christianity is not about following a set of rules. It's about how God changes people from the inside and this shows itself on the outside. It's like nothing else.

Christian Persecution and the Need to stand up for Human Rights

Did you realise that Christians are by far the most persecuted and murdered group in the world today. So, like any persecuted group, we should care. But mostly the world remains completely silent while innocent people are murdered.

Up to 300 million Christians are actively persecuted for their faith. A study which came out of Europe in 2014 agreed with the fact that Christians are the most persecuted group (not just religious group) on earth. Across the world, thousands of Christians are murdered simply because they are Christians wanting the right to freely worship God.

There are 1000s injured, tortured, kidnapped, imprisoned, have their homes and churches burned down.

In a 2 month period in 2015 (these are just some of the killings):

- 21 Christians killed in Egypt
- Christian man tortured to death by police in Pakistan
- 16 killed (82 injured) on two bomb attacks on Pakistan churches
- Over 82 Christians killed in Northern Nigeria
- 4 Christian men burnt to death by terrorists in Kenya
- 148 Christian students killed in Kenyan University campus
- 29 Christians killed in Aleppo, Syria
- A 14 year-old boy burnt to death in Pakistan because he said he was a Christian
- 30 Ethiopian Christians killed by Islamic State
- 12 Christians thrown overboard, drowned by members of another religion on a refugee boat
- Christian man killed for his faith in Tanzania
- Many others are killed in places like North Korea

The Main Difference that Christians believe – Jesus

There was a bunch of t-shirts that were released called 'Jesus is My Homeboy' which some people liked and others didn't like! I remember – I wore one once!!

(See Powerpoint pic for tshirt logo).

The main difference with Christianity is Jesus who Christians believe is the way to God and the one who brings peace, healing, hope, help, life and life forever in a perfect place called heaven.

If you went for a job, your employer would ask you for a reference... Hopefully not like the first one of these – but hopefully like the second one of these!

(Show the second and third Powerpoint slides)

For Jesus, the evidence is the church – billions and billions of people over thousands of years who have believed in Jesus and seen their life changed and helped others. My life totally changed when I became a Christian – instead of violence and hatred, I was changed to someone who wanted to help the poor, help empower young people and see communities and people changed for the better.

Christians believe that the way to God is also amazing and easy. It's not through obeying rules. No-one can be forced to be a Christian. You can't do anything to earn it or deserve it. In return, you get a completely changed life and a life that can make a real difference in the world.

Youtube Video - One Solitary Life (read by Bing Crosby)

Direct link – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DC2vHke_dvo

'One Solitary Life' poem about Jesus (slightly different to video version)

He was born in an obscure village
The child of a peasant woman
He grew up in another obscure village
Where he worked in a carpenter shop
Until he was thirty when public opinion turned against him ... *(continued)*

He never wrote a book
He never held an office
He never went to college
He never visited a big city

He never travelled more than two hundred miles
From the place where he was born
He did none of the things
Usually associated with greatness
He had no credentials but himself

He was only thirty three

His friends ran away
One of them denied him
He was turned over to his enemies
And went through the mockery of a trial
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves
While dying, his executioners gambled for his clothing
The only property he had on earth
When he was dead
He was laid in a borrowed grave
Through the pity of a friend

Nineteen centuries have come and gone

And today Jesus is the central figure of the human race
And the leader of mankind's progress
All the armies that have ever marched
All the navies that have ever sailed
All the parliaments that have ever sat
All the kings that ever reigned put together
Have not affected the life of mankind on earth
As powerfully as that one solitary life

Thought

So what about your life? One solitary life can make a difference. Christians also believe one solitary life who believes in Jesus can make a difference. So what about you? What do you believe? What kind of difference for good – could you make?