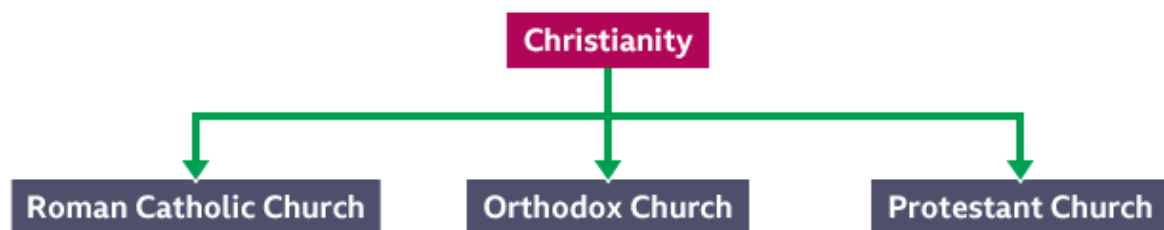


Denominations or Branches of Christianity

Christianity is the largest of the world religions, with approximately 2.4 billion followers (one third of the world's population) across the globe. Christianity began as a branch of Judaism, and Jesus himself was a Jew. As Christianity is such a large religion with an international following, it is not surprising that there are many different branches within Christianity. These groups have varying understandings of what it means to be Christian.

The various groups or branches within Christianity are referred to as denominations. Sometimes different Christian churches are also referred to as denominations.

The three main denominations of Christianity are:



Roman Catholic tradition

- Roman Catholicism is the largest group within Christianity, having approximately 1.2 billion members.
- Catholics accept the authority of the pope, who rules and guides the Church.
- The pope is seen as the successor of Saint Peter and is regarded as the head of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Catholics believe that there are seven sacraments, which aid humans in achieving salvation.

Protestant tradition

- Protestants do not accept the authority of the pope, and they believe the Bible is the only source of authority. These are key aspects of Protestant belief.
- In comparison to Catholics, the sacraments do not hold the same significance for Protestants. Salvation is achieved through faith instead.
- There are many subgroups within the Protestant tradition, such as Baptists, Church of England and Methodists.
- There are also sub groups, which are groups that do not agree with mainstream Protestant beliefs. They have different beliefs. Examples of these groups are Unitarians and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Orthodox tradition

- Orthodox Christians reject the authority of the pope.
- They do, however, believe that the sacraments are essential for salvation.
- The Orthodox Church can trace its origins back to the first Church started by Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem. Many Orthodox Christians believe that this gives them greater authority than other denominations and that they are following the right teachings.
- Many Orthodox churches are organised on a national level, for example the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.