

Sacraments, Rites of Passage & The Church Community		✓
Sacrament	St Augustine, in the 5th century, described a sacrament as: 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace.' The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: 'the seven sacraments are the signs and instruments by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ the head throughout the Church which is his Body.'	
Roman Catholic Sacraments	The Roman Catholic Church recognises 7 sacraments: Baptism - Eucharist/Holy Communion - Confirmation - Reconciliation. (This Is Confession - Anointing Of The Sick - Marriage - Holy Orders.	
Anglican & Methodist Sacraments	"There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." : Baptism & Eucharist/Holy Communion	
Rites of Passage	There are four Christian Rites of Passage - services which mark the key stages of a person's journey through life.	
Infant Baptism	Infant Baptism is a service of initiation and welcome to the Christian Church. The service gives thanks to God for the gift of a new life, and that new life is dedicated to the service and worship of God. The parents and Godparents promise to bring the child up to know and understand their faith. White robes are worn by the baby as a sign of purity, and water is used to symbolically wash away sin. The baby is given its name and is baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The baby is marked on the forehead with the sign of the cross, and in some church a lighted candle is given to the family as a sign of having passed from darkness to light. Jesus Christ is the light of the world. In the Orthodox Church, babies are baptised by total immersion, and confirmed in the same service - Chrismation.	
Confirmation	Confirmation usually takes place between the ages of 11 and 14, when a young person is spiritually responsible and is willing to renew the promises made on their behalf by their Godparents and their baptism. They are confirming that they are willing to become a full member of the church. A bishop always conducts the confirmation service and symbolically passes on the gift of the Holy Spirit to the person being confirmed.	
Believers Baptism (Adult Baptism)	Adult Baptisms usually take place in the Baptist Church. This denomination believe that only adults who are ready to commit their lives to the church should be baptised, just as Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. The baptism is by 'total immersion' in either a pool, lake, river or the sea. Going under the water represents the death and resurrection of Christ and the beginning of a new life as a Christian.	

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Marriage Rites	<p>Marriage takes place between two adults who are in a loving and committed relationship. Legally, marriages can only take place over the age of eighteen, or sixteen with the permission of both sets of parents. The churches say that marriage provides the proper, stable environment required for bringing up children. During the marriage service the bride and groom make vows to one another and exchange rings as a symbol of eternal love and commitment.</p> <p>In Orthodox marriage ceremonies they are also crowned king and queen of their own new family. The linked crowns are called Stefana.</p>	
Marriage Vows	<p>N, will you take N to be your husband/wife? Will you love him/her, comfort him/her, honour and protect him/her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him/her as long as you both shall live?</p> <p>I, N , take you, N , to be my husband/wife, to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part; according to God's holy law.</p> <p>In the presence of God I make this vow.</p>	
Funeral Rites	<p>A funeral is the final rite of passage. Funeral services have a number of purposes, but they are more for the comfort of the friends and relatives left behind than for the person who has died. Bible readings which explain that the soul has eternal life, in heaven, with God are read during the service. The words 'earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust' are also said. These words explain that whilst the soul returns to the Creator, the body returns to the earth from which it was created. (Adam in the story of creation was made from the dust of the earth and then God breathed life into him. Many funerals are now called 'A Celebration of the Life of' and recall happy memories of the person.</p>	
The Church Community	<p>The word church comes from the Greek word 'ekklesia', which means 'out call'. Christians are the 'called out people' - called to follow by God and/or Jesus. The Christian Church is not about the building where Christians meet, but rather is about the gathering together of God's people, the congregation. Christians believe that the church, the body of believers, are the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25). Churches support families and their local community through groups like: The Mothers' Union, Guides and Scouts, Youth Clubs, Sunday School, Mum's and Toddlers, Men's Groups, Pastoral Care and Visiting the Sick.</p>	