

## **RELIGION: *STUDIES OF RELIGION***

### **Questions**

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*Outline and explain the Christian beliefs which are expressed in baptism (6)*

Core Christian beliefs are expressed in baptism through the use of symbols, words and actions. Essential beliefs conveyed through the ritual of baptism are the death and resurrection of Christ, the Trinity and the light of Christ. These doctrines of faith are proclaimed using water, the profession of faith and the baptismal candle. The symbol of water, specifically going into and out of water, represents the death and resurrection of Christ as well as the individual's rise to new life with Christ. The Nicene Creed contains the fundamental beliefs of Christianity such as the Trinity and the afterlife. Baptismal vows are a testimony of faith and include God as creator and redeemer and the Holy Spirit. The baptismal candle personifies the light and power of Christ through which salvation is achieved; "She/he is to walk always as a child of the light. May she/he keep the flame of faith alive in her/his heart" (Catholic service)

*How does baptism contribute to the faith of the individual in Christianity? (5)*

Baptism contributes to the faith of the individual as it is an initiation into the Christian community and an expression of faith in one God and in their relationship with God and the community. By sharing with Christ, the individual can also share in his life and ministry; "Baptised in Christ, you have clothed yourself in Christ...you belong to Christ" (Galatians 3). For some denominations for which it is common practice to baptize infants, the significance for the individual is minimal as it is the parents and godparents responsibility to nurture the child on their journey of faith. For denominations which practice believer baptism (Baptist Churches) there is considerably greater emphasis on the individual's conscious choice to accept God. At any age however, the implication for the individual is that they must now live according to their commitment.

*How significant is baptism for the individual and the Christian community? (5)*

Baptism is an extremely significant practice for both the individual and the community. The individual becomes part of the universal Church and acknowledges their faith in God and the wider Christian community. Whilst the individual accepts God in their life, it is through the sacrament of baptism that salvation is attained by the grace of God.

Baptism is central to the growth and strengthening of the entire Christian community. It is the community's responsibility to nurture, support and lead the new adherent in their faith journey and

celebration of Christian life. Baptism benefits the community as it renews and enriches the whole congregation as they are called to reflect upon their own faith. Furthermore, there is a sense of unity and equality as salvation is a community-driven goal. According to Paul; “all of you were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:27-28)