A very warm welcome from the local
Christian communities in Derby at St Nick's (Allestree),
St Paul's (Quarndon),
St Edmund's (Allestree) & St Matthew's (Darley Abbey).

We hope that this guide to Christianity will help you explore answers to questions, such as:

- What is life really all about?
- How much does God really love me?
- Where does Jesus fit into all of this?
- Why are events 2000 years ago relevant today?
 - Can life have any meaning without God?

We continue to pray for you.

Christianity consists of various parts.

You may wish to move to each part gradually:

PART 1: God created you. God loves you. God wants to express his love for you through a personal relationship.

PART 2: Life's choices bring a barrier.

PART 3: Who is Jesus?

PART 4: Is it true?

PART 5: Looking further.

Appendix: The Source of Bible quotes



WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GOD?

- ➤ Where is God?
- > How big is God?

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY'S ANSWER?

YOU ARE LOVED **BEYOND MEASURE**

- You were created by a loving God
- You have great value
- God loves you
- God wants to have a personal relationship with you

Christianity has its source in the Holy Bible.

The Bible is quoted to show how much God loves you.

God created you

What the Bible says You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me

together in my mother's womb. You saw me before I was born. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! (see appendix note 1)

You have been made in a unique and wonderful way.

Yes! GOD created YOU

- God knew you before you were even born
- We are NOT accidents of nature
- God wants to give you a brand new start a new way of living



And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

(see appendix note 2)

God wants you to know: YOU HAVE WORTH

What the Bible says
Trust in the Lord and do good.
Take delight in the Lord, and he
will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your
way to the Lord. (see appendix note 3)

God wants you to trust Him; commit your way to Him. God wants to give you the desires of your heart.

- God is NOT some unspeaking, unfeeling 'force'
- God is a person, your Creator
- He created you to be in relationship with Him

What the Bible says own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

(see appendix note 4)

God loves you

You have been created in the image of God AND God seeks a personal relationship with YOU

WHY? ... Because God LOVES you

God wants to express his love for you through a personal relationship with you

What the Bible says gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (see appendix note 5)

- God LOVES you and wants the very best for you
- God is the ONLY ONE who knows you 'inside out' . . . better than you know yourself

God wants you to TRUST Him

- When you trust God, you're trusting the One who created you
- When you begin to know Him, he offers you new everlasting life – the absolute fullness of life, the God-connected life

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GOD?

- Could it be that God is EVERYWHERE?
- Could it be that God is FAR BIGGER than anyone might ever imagine?



YOU ARE LOVED BEYOND MEASURE OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD What Prevents this?

Life's choices bring a barrier

- ➤ We constantly have to make choices:

 To go somewhere or not to go there

 To say something in anger or to keep quiet

 To hold a grudge about someone —

 or to forgive them

 To know the right thing to do and to do it —

 or to decide to do the wrong thing
- All our choices and decisions have consequences – good, or bad

What if we decide to make the wrong choices?

- We may not suffer, but others may suffer
- Our culture likes to think that each person can decide what is "right, true and moral"
- But what are the consequences of everyone having their own contradictory "right, true and moral" standards?
- God has set some standards about what is right and wrong for EVERYONE to follow
- Wrong choices or decisions can keep us from a personal relationship with God

Consequences of wrong choices or decisions

What the Bible says If you know the right thing to do and don't do it, that, for you, is evil.

(see appendix note 6)

People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the Lord.

(see appendix note 7)

God is PERFECT in every way. People are NOT.

The reality of bad choices



We all fall short of God's glorious standard.

(see appendix note 8)

- We all fall short by not understanding or even caring about what is 'right' – we mess things up
- > Everyone falls short we can't help it
- "We're human" so we might say, "So what?"

What's so bad about doing the wrong thing?

What the Bible says
that time from the things you
are now ashamed of? Those things result in
death! (see appendix note 9)

> This is a big problem . . . the outcome is death

God's standards about right & wrong

What the Bible says mind and strength – AND – Love your neighbour as yourself. (see appendix note 10)

God's standards are for our benefit – they enable right relationships with both God and each other

Bad choices are a BIG problem - WHY?

- Because God is PERFECT he hates injustice, unkindness, empty ritual and idolatry . . .
- He hates fraud, greed, theft, oppression, hypocrisy, extortion, lying, murder . . .
- All these things are against God's standards
- The personal relationship he wants with us can't therefore happen
- Our wrong-doing has created a BARRIER between God and us

WHAT DOES GOD DO? . . .

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT GOD?

- Could it be that God's standards are necessary?
- Could our greatest need be for FORGIVENESS?



YOU ARE LOVED BEYOND MEASURE

BUILDING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

How does God remove the barrier?

ONLY THROUGH JESUS! ... JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HOLDS THE 'BUILDING PLAN'

That's why Jesus came – as a human being who lived on this earth so we could understand what God is like

Jesus said, "I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one can come to the Father EXCEPT through me."

(see appendix note 11)

WHO IS JESUS? This is what the Bible says

Born in poverty, Jesus' destiny is then revealed:

Mary wrapped Jesus snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no **lodging available for them.** (see appendix note 12)

He is a LIGHT to reveal God to the nations.

(see appendix note 13)

Jesus had compassion and healed those in need:

Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out and touched him. Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed. (see appendix note 14)

Jesus always seeks those who've lost their way:

If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, won't he leave the 99 others and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? Then he rejoices that he's found his lost sheep.

In the same way, there is much joy in heaven over the one person who repents and returns to God. (see appendix note 15)

Jesus often used stories to illustrate his message.

Jesus shows God's love reaching out to everyone:

"God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

(see appendix note 16)

Having been welcomed into Jerusalem only a few days ago, Jesus now faces torture and crucifixion:

"Crucify him!" they shouted. "Why? What crime has he committed?" Pilate demanded. But the mob roared, "Crucify him!" (see appendix note 17)

The Roman officer confirmed that Jesus was dead, so Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. He wrapped Jesus' body in cloth and laid it in a tomb. (see appendix note 18)

> The Resurrection — Jesus comes back to new life:

The angel said to the women, "He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!" (see appendix note 19)

For forty days after his death he appeared to them many times in ways that proved beyond doubt that he was alive. (see appendix note 20)



YOU ARE LOVED BEYOND MEASURE

BUILDING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

IS IT TRUE?

JESUS SAID, "I tell you the TRUTH . . . "
frequently – in fact the Bible quotes
these words about 70 times!

That makes him either:

- > a habitual liar . . . or
- > he always told the truth.

Here are some examples:

"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They have already passed from death into life." (see appendix note 21)

"I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die." (see appendix note 22)

"I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me." (see appendix note 23)

"I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name." (see appendix note 24)

"I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." (see appendix note 25)

"I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on." (see appendix note 26)

"I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy."

(see appendix note 27)

"<u>I tell you the truth</u>, one of you will betray me." (see appendix note 28)



YOU ARE LOVED BEYOND MEASURE

BUILDING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

LOOKING FURTHER

We're not quite there - just going a little deeper!

A Penalty

- If we break the law of the land we become subject to a penalty for our wrong-doing
- Failing to live by God's standards of love means we are subject to a penalty - that penalty is eternal separation from God
- Because we all fail, we all face that penalty, but that is NOT what God wants for us

- 'Eternal separation from God' is what the Bible calls 'Death' - that's NOT what God wants for us
- But, why did Jesus have to die?

Jesus Christ died in our place

Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

(see appendix note 29)

We now need to know more about Jesus

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. (see appendix note 30)

Jesus was born into this world, just as we are. He was FULLY a human being.

What the Bible says

Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him.

(see appendix note 31)

> Jesus died, just as one day all of us will.

So . . . What's so special about Jesus?

The angel told Mary, "The Holy What the Bible says Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the 'Most High' will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be **called the Son of God."** (see appendix note 32)

What does this mean?

- > It means that Mary's pregnancy was no ordinary pregnancy. She conceived because PERFECT God (through his 'Holy Spirit') made Mary pregnant.
- It means that Jesus, whilst being FULLY human, was also FULLY God.
- It means that Jesus' life was PERFECT as it followed God's standards COMPLETELY.
- It means that Jesus, the PERFECT human being, could sacrifice his life in place of our death.

This is how Mary decided to do as God asked: Mary asked the angel, "But how What the Bible says can this happen. I am a virgin."

The angel's reply, "Nothing is impossible with God."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."

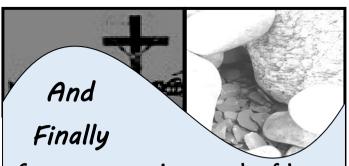
(see appendix note 33)

Remember – Jesus did not stay dead. He came back to new life and he offers us that absolute fullness of life (here, and beyond into our next life) when we decide to be connected to God.

So, it's over to you. What do you think? Is it true? (or is it a myth, a nonsense?)

What does a Christian "Something was say? missing - but what was it? Gradually, then suddenly, I realised – this Jesus should be at the CENTRE of my life. But is it really true - God loves me? YES, it is! Lord Jesus, please come into my life – I need you. I discovered a gentle, loving hand guiding me. I still make mistakes, wrong choices, but God is gently making me aware, then forgiving me. I found prayer, answers, coincidences, the unexpected – a new path being mapped out, with constant help along the way."

It's up to you to decide. Only you can do that. "Does God really love me beyond measure?"



Some encouraging words of Jesus (as recorded in the Bible)

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (see appendix note 34)

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." (see appendix note 35)

For more information, click here

APPENDIX

This section lists the source of each of the Bible quotations.

The Bible is not really a single book but a collection of more than 60 books, brought together over a 1500-year period.

- The 'New Testament' relates to the time around the life of Jesus (2000 years ago), whilst the 'Old Testament' is about earlier times.
- Together they show how the one God of the universe saw his good creation turn bad through human rebellion, God's patient and loving dealings with a particular group of people (Israel), and the fulfilment of his purpose and promise through Jesus Christ.

The Bible translations used:

- Apart from 'Genesis', 'Psalms' and 'Proverbs', all quotes are from the New Testament.
- Unless stated otherwise, the 'New Living Translation' of the Bible is used.
- NIV is the 'New International Version' of the Bible.

PART 1

Note 1: extracts from Psalm 139 vs13-16 (a psalm of David from 3000 years ago)

Note 2: Matthew 10 v30 (words of Jesus – NIV)

Note 3: extracts from Psalm 37 vs3-5 (NIV)

Note 4: Genesis 1 v27 (from the story of Creation)

Note 5: extracts from Matthew 7 v11 (words of Jesus – NIV)

PART 2

Note 6: Letter of James 4 v17 ('The Message' version)

Note 7: Proverbs 19 v3

Note 8: extracts from Paul's letter to Romans 3 v23

Note 9: Paul's letter to Romans 6 v21 (NIV)

Note 10: extracts from Mark 12 vs30,31 (NIV – Jesus' summary of God's standards about right and wrong)

PART 3

Note 11: taken from John 14 v6 (some words are in capitals to emphasise Jesus' statement)

Note 12: extract taken from Luke 2 v7

Note 13: extract from Luke 2 v32 (word in capitals for emphasis)

Note 14: extracts from Mark 1 vs41,42

Note 15: summary of Jesus' "Lost Sheep" story, Luke 15 vs3-7

Note 16: from John 3 v16

Note 17: extracts from Mark 15 vs13,14

Note 18: extracts from Mark 15 vs45,46 (This is not the same Joseph as in the Christmas story)

Note 19: extracts from Mark 16 vs5,6

Note 20: extract from Acts 1 v3 ('Good News Bible' version)

PART 4

Note 21: extract from John 5 v24

Note 22: John 8 v51

Note 23: <u>John 13 v20</u>

Note 24: extract from John 16 v23

Note 25: <u>Luke 18 v17</u>

Note 26: Mark 12 vs43,44

Note 27: John 16 v20

Note 28: extract from Matthew 26 v21

PART 5

Note 29: extract from Paul's letter to Ephesians 2 v13

Note 30: extract from Matthew 2 v1

Note 31: extract from Acts 2 v23 (St Peter was speaking to a crowd

in Jerusalem. 'Gentile' means everyone who is not a Jew)

Note 32: from Luke 1 v35

Note 33: extracts taken from Luke 1 vs34-38

Note 34: extracts from Matthew 11 vs28-29

Note 35: Revelation 3 v20

Explanation of Bible quotes listed: *for example*, <u>Luke 1 vs34-38</u> *means*: the book of Luke, chapter 1, verses 34 to 38

COPYRIGHT PAGE

New Living Translation:

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Good News Bible:

Scriptures and additional materials quoted are from the Good News Bible © 1994 published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Good News Bible © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976, 1992. Used with permission.

NIV (New International Version):

Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV®
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.
Used with permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

'The Message' version:

Scripture taken from *THE MESSAGE*. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson, 1993, 1994, 1995. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.