

Genesis 1:1–2:3 says that God created in this way:

Day 1 – light to separate night from day;

Day 2 – the sky to separate the waters;

Day 3 – dry land and seas, vegetation (plants and trees);

Day 4 – sun, moon and stars;

Day 5 – fish and birds;

Day 6 – animals, creeping things, humans;

Day 7 – God rested and declared the seventh day a holy day.

‘God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.’

For Christians the world and human beings do not just exist, they have an explanation and a purpose. They believe that all that God created is good and that human beings are the summit of his creation. God made human beings in his own image which means that humans have freedom and responsibility. They are free to believe in God and do what he says, or reject him.

God did not just make earth, he also made heaven and this part of the creed reminds Christians that God intends life on earth to be a preparation for eternal life in heaven (for more detail see factfile 25).

The supreme being must be unique, without equal. If God is not one, he is not God. Faith in God leads us to turn to him alone as our first origin and our ultimate goal, and neither to prefer anything to him nor to substitute anything for him.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (228-229).

FACTFILE 6

JESUS

At the time appointed by God, the only Son of the Father, the eternal Word, that is, the Word and substantial Image of the Father, became incarnate; without losing his divine nature, he has assumed human nature.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (479).

Mary is truly ‘Mother of God’ since she is mother of the eternal Son of God made man, who is God himself.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (509).

Christians believe that Jesus:

is the only son of God

Jesus is not separate from God. When Jesus was born, God appeared in human form to show people his nature and to die for their sins. Jesus becoming human is called the **Incarnation** – God coming in flesh. Christians believe that Jesus has two natures, human and divine in one person. This is the great mystery of Jesus’ life.

was born of the Virgin Mary

Christians refer to Mary as ‘the Mother of God’ because, through Mary, God became human in Jesus. They believe that she remained a virgin and that through her immaculate conception she was free from original sin.

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried

Jesus lived at a particular time in history and so his death is remembered by the name of the historical Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. It was a real death because he was crucified, he died, and he was buried. Christians believe that the death of Jesus was part of God’s plan. Jesus is called the Christ (the Greek form of the Hebrew, Messiah) because he was God’s Anointed One, the one chosen to take away the sins of the world through his death on the cross.

descended to the dead

This is another reminder that it was a real death which included the suffering needed to forgive our sins.

on the third day he rose again

Because Jesus was God, death was not the end. Christians believe that having suffered for our sins and died, Jesus rose from the dead. They believe that the risen Jesus was with them and could even pass through walls and locked doors. Christians also believe that his resurrection is a promise that they too will rise from the dead.

ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father

Christ’s risen body was taken to heaven where he is with the Father, constantly interceding for humans. The Church is seen as the body of Christ on earth, although its head, Jesus, is now in heaven.

will come again to judge the living and the dead

Christians believe that at the end of time Jesus will return for the final judgement when all people will be brought before Jesus and he will judge them on the basis of the deeds and faith the secrets of which only he knows.

Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, precedes us into the Father’s glorious kingdom so that we, the members of his Body, may live in the hope of one day being with him forever.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (666).

Jesus freely offered himself for our salvation. Beforehand, during the Last Supper, he both symbolized this offering and made it really present: ‘This is my body which is given for you’.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (621).

Christ the first born from the dead is the principle of our own resurrection.

Catechism of the Catholic Church (658).

