

QUESTIONS

Factfile 1 Catholic Upbringing and Belief in God

- 1 Have a class discussion on what parts of a religious upbringing are likely to make you believe in God and whether any of it might turn you against God.

Factfile 2 Religious Experience

- 1 Write your definition of a religious experience.
- 2 Explain how a religious experience might make you believe in God.
- 3 How else could a religious experience be explained?

Factfile 3 Experience of the World

- 1 Divide a page into two columns headed 'Believe in God' and 'Not believe in God'. Then go through people's experiences of the world and put them into one of the columns. You will need to think about what goes into the second column, as this is not given in the book!

Factfile 4 Evil and Suffering

- 1 Write down in your own words why the existence of evil and suffering in the world makes it difficult to believe in God.
- 2 Write two Christian responses to the problem of evil and suffering.
- 3 Discuss in a group whether these responses succeed in dealing with the problem.
- 4 'Miracles don't happen nowadays.' Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have considered another point of view. You should use information from the whole chapter in answering this question.

BELIEFS AND VALUES

2

The main Christian beliefs are found in the Apostles' Creed which Christians recite as a list of their beliefs at various services. The creed is:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

The creed begins with, 'I believe in God'. This means Christians believe in only one God who is unlimited (infinite) and eternal. This belief in one God is known as **monotheism**.

Christians refer to God as their father because Jesus taught that God is our father – God made us as his children and we can have a relationship with God similar to the relationship children have with their father. However, unlike an earthly father, God will never let us down and will always be there to give us the guidance and protection we would like from our earthly fathers. This is particularly shown in the Lord's Prayer where Jesus taught his followers to speak to God as our father. Because God is our father, he must love us and God shows his love in sending Jesus to save us from our sins, and in all the wonderful gifts of life on earth.

Christians also believe that God is almighty. God is all-powerful and can do whatever he wants. As Christians say at the end of the Lord's Prayer, 'For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory'.

As our all-powerful father, God created the world in six days and created humans in his image. When Jesus spoke of God, he referred to God as understood in the tradition of the Jewish people. For Christians this means the God of the Old Testament which begins by stating that God is the creator (*Genesis 1:1–2:3*).

FACTFILE 5

GOD THE FATHER

(Jesus) said to them, "When you pray, this is what to say: 'Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test.' "

Luke 11:2-4.