

A legend.
A legacy.
A lifetime of inspiration.

What Christianity is all about

Key Information

Subject area: Religious and Moral Education

Time required: This resource is planned to be taught as one 50 minute lesson. Depending on the length and depth of discussions you may wish to utilise the content over a series of lessons. The resource does not require pupils to have any previous knowledge of Christianity, though this would be beneficial.

Activity: Eric Liddell and the values of Jesus

Eric Liddell values: Compassion & Integrity

Key skills:

- Communication
- Empathy

Learning intentions:

- To explore what the word 'incarnation' means in Christianity.
- To learn about Eric Liddell, his beliefs and motives and what others thought about him.
- To explore why Jesus and Eric Liddell broke religious rules.

Success criteria:

- I can explain what incarnation means in Christianity.
- I can explain why both Jesus and Eric Liddell broke religious rules.

Experiences and outcomes:

- *(RME 3-01a)* Having reflected upon Christian sources, I can explain some key Christian beliefs about God, Jesus, the human condition and the natural world, and how these beliefs lead to actions for Christians.
- *(RME 3-01b)* Through investigating and reflecting upon how Christians put their beliefs into action, I can reflect upon the consequences of putting my own beliefs into action.
- *(RME 3-02a)* Having reflected upon Christian responses to issues of morality, I can discuss ways in which to create a more just, equal, compassionate and tolerant society.

Supporting Materials:

- [Presentation](#)
- [Video of Eric winning moment in the 400m Olympic final](#)
- [Video clip exploring incarnation](#)



Uncle Eric Fact

Eric sincerely believed that it was important to keep Sunday as a special day that was dedicated to God. This was why he refused to run in the 100 metres event at the 1924 Paris Olympic Games, and why he originally refused to arrange and referee sporting games on a Sunday in the internment camp. Liddell would lock away all sports equipment on a Saturday night and then unlock it again on a Monday morning. But then one Sunday a group of youngsters, weary of the humdrum rhythm of the listless day, broke into the hut, took the hockey sticks and began a game to occupy themselves. Without a referee, the hockey game disintegrated into quarrelling and fighting. Liddell had a decision to make and from that point on Eric added Sunday refereeing to his busy Sunday schedule. By taking on this important role, Eric showed that the ongoing safety of the young people was of greater importance to him than his chosen lifestyle and beliefs.

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Lesson Format

In this lesson pupils will engage in discussions around why Eric refused to run on a Sunday and the similarities between the way Eric and Jesus lived their lives. Pupils will be encouraged to reflect on how Eric showed compassion for others in his decisions and interactions just like Jesus did.

If the class hasn't seen the '[Eric Liddell 100 introductory video](#)' please show this now.

Introduction

Start by sharing the video of Eric's winning moment in the 400m Olympic final. Emphasise to your pupils that the video shows not just an athlete winning a race, but an athlete winning the Olympic Games, and becoming the first person from their nation to become Olympic champion. And in an event that wasn't even their best event

Discuss the following questions with your class:

- Why did Eric Liddell refuse to run on a Sunday, despite being one of Team GB's most likely gold medals?
- Why do you think he chose to keep the rule of his faith rather than his commitment to running?

Task 1

Ask pupils to read the paragraphs 'Sunday as the Sabbath for Christians' and 'The Core of Christianity'. These can be read from the presentation slides.

To introduce the topic of incarnation to the class, ask pupils to read 'Incarnation' from the presentation slides and show pupils the explaining incarnation video clip. Once pupils have read the text and watched the video explain to the class that the programme tries to entertain the potentially very strange idea that God would or could become a human. In the video, it is claimed that the best way to send an important message is to give it yourself verbally. This is particularly true if the message is about what we are meant to be like. If we got a letter telling us we could do things we thought we couldn't, this would be less believable than a person showing us we could.

Task 2

Ask pupils to read 'A revelation' from the presentation slides.

Ask pupils to think about if there has ever been a time they have been excluded or have made someone else feel excluded. Ask pupils to discuss the topic with the person next to them. Ask pupils to share their experiences of exclusion. You could use some of the following to aid your discussions:

- Have you ever excluded someone? Why did you?
- Have you ever been excluded?
- How did it make you feel?
- How did it make you want to treat others?

Two thousand years ago, people were constantly creating 'them and us' divisions. They could be religious, nationalistic, and were often against Roman collaborators. Excluding someone can make you feel better about yourself, at least in a limited way. When on the receiving end, exclusion can, if we're not very careful, lead us to desire to be the excluder. This is the doctrine of original sin.

Task 3: Jesus' message

Ask pupils to read 'Jesus' message' from the presentation slides. Ask pupils to discuss with the person next to them what they think Jesus meant when he said "I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices"? Ask pupils to share their views with the rest of the class. If pupils are struggling with the question you could share the following with them.

Jesus' message, most simply, was that God loved everyone. And that God had a special interest in the oppressed in society. He broke the religious rules and laws that harmed people. This often upset people that thought or claimed that they were God's favourites. Jesus said that a much better world was possible. He wanted to see the world transformed into one where people realised they were loved and valued and so, in turn, accepted, forgave and loved others. That was what humans were for.

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Task 4: Jesus' compassion

Ask pupils to read 'Jesus' compassion' from the presentation slides. Ask pupils to discuss with the person next to them how they think the lady in the story would have felt when Jesus didn't condemn her? Ask pupils to share their views with the rest of the class.

Task 5: Jesus working on the Sabbath

Ask pupils to read 'Jesus working on the Sabbath' from the presentation slides. Ask the class if they are surprised that Jesus broke the rule of working on the Sabbath? Ask pupils to discuss with the person next to them why they think Jesus chose to break the rule. Ask pupils to share their views with the rest of the class.

Task 6: Eric Liddell working on the Sabbath

Ask pupils to read 'Eric Liddell working on the Sabbath' from the presentation slides. Ask the class if they are surprised that Eric broke the rule of working on the Sabbath? Ask pupils to discuss with the person next to them why they think Eric chose to break the rule. Ask pupils to share their views with the rest of the class.

Task 7: Incarnation - becoming Jesus for others

Revisit the topic of incarnation with the class. Ask pupils to read 'Incarnation - becoming Jesus for others' from the presentation slides. Once pupils have read the text ask them to answer the following questions by discussing their views with the person sat next to them:

- Do you think Eric Liddell was trying to be Jesus for those he came across in life?
- If you decided that you wanted to overcome division and help people get along, what are some things you would do?
- Ask pupils to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Plenary

There are many stories about Eric Liddell that show him as a highly successful 'Christ figure' who strived to treat everyone he met with the same compassion. Ask pupils to read 'Eric Liddell's compassion' from the presentation slides. Once pupils have read the text ask them to answer the following questions by discussing their views with the person sat next to them:

- How 'Jesus-like' was Eric Liddell?
- Do any of the stories we've learned about Jesus have features in common with the choices Eric Liddell made and the way he treated others?

There have been excluded people in each of the stories your class have learnt about today. These people have then been included by either Eric or Jesus. Try to answer the following questions:

- How do you think the people in the stories who had been excluded originally, but then subsequently included by Jesus or Eric felt?
- Can you name any groups who are excluded in the world presently?
- Are there any groups of individuals you can think of who have been excluded historically?