

Christianity - Issues for Sport & Physical Activity

Key Facts	
Origins	Christianity shares its origins and early history with Judaism. It began in 1st century Galilee with a man called Jesus, believed by Christians to be the Son of God.
Theism	Christianity is a monotheistic religion, its followers believing that there is only one God, whom they call Father and that there are three parts to this God - the Holy Trinity where God is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They also recognise Jesus as the Son of God.
Major sects	<p>There are many sub divisions or groups that base their beliefs on the teachings of Jesus. The most common are Roman Catholics, Protestants, Baptist and Methodist, Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Amish and Jehovah's witnesses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>For the majority of Christians there are few issues which affect participation in sport, some of the more orthodox groups may have issues which are specific to their community.</i> ■ <i>Undertaking any activity on a Sunday used to be frowned upon. Whilst the restrictions on this have relaxed over the years, there may be some individuals who object to competing on a holy day.</i>
Place of worship	<p>Churches, Chapels and Cathedrals, The Amish worship in their houses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Churches often have community /social centres attached and these may provide additional opportunities for participating in sport or physical activity.</i>
Sacred texts	<p>The most important Christian texts are the two volumes of the Bible, called the Old Testament and the New Testament.</p> <p>The Old Testament is the original Hebrew Bible. The New Testament contains the story of Jesus and the early Church.</p>
Original language	Both Greek and Latin were used in the early Christian churches. Otherwise the standard language of the day was used.
Spiritual Leaders	<p>Priests and Ministers with Popes as heads of the Catholic and Coptic Churches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Priests and ministers are often at the centre of any close knit religious community e.g; eastern european communities. The church is therefore an excellent place to promote any events your club may be planning.</i>



Christianity and its followers	
Worldwide adherents	Christianity is the world's largest religion with over 2 billion followers. Christians can be found all over the world.
UK population	The UK Census 2001 recorded just over 41 million Christians in the United Kingdom.
Faith requirements and holy days	
Diet	<p>There are very few dietary codes within Christianity. Although some people may observe fasts on certain religious festivals including Good Friday and also the period of Lent (40 days leading up to Easter). Most people will abstain from certain foodstuffs, while a small minority will abstain from all food.</p> <p>Coptic Christians take fasting seriously and there are 210 days of fasting each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Where there are dietary issues that may affect someone participating, then alternative foods should be available if necessary.</i> ■ <i>Where fasting is undertaken, then this may affect performance in an event or activity.</i>
Dress	<p>There are some dress codes with some of the smaller Christian sects such as the Amish who prefer to be modestly dressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Issues respecting modesty should be considered which will allow the head to be covered, or participants to wear long sleeves and trousers should they wish.</i>
Major Events	<p>There are many holy days throughout the year and depending upon the specific group, their importance can vary. The main events are; Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, Lent, The Annunciation, Ascension Day, The Assumption, Corpus Christi, The Epiphany & The Feast of the Immaculate Conception.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Events should be planned with the religious calendar in mind. This should take account of festivals and periods of fasting.</i> ■ <i>Where sports events take place over these periods and in particular the Christmas and Easter period, clubs need to be aware of individuals sensitivities of these issues and make allowances.</i>

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