



RE

## Why do some people believe God exists?

*This investigation enables pupils to learn in depth from different religious and non-religious groups about belief in God. Pupils enquire into the key question, raising questions about the nature and existence of God before focusing on Christian ideas about God. Pupils will consider why people do or don't believe in God and the impact that might have on the way they live their everyday life.*

### Key Questions

- How many people believe in God?
- Is God real? What do Christians think?
- How do we know what is true?
- Why do people believe or not believe in God?
- What do Christians believe about how the world began? Do they all share the same idea?



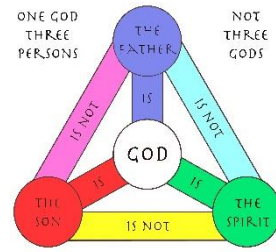
### Key Vocabulary

agnostic	A person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God
atheist	A person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods.
belief	An acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof.
creation	The creating of the universe, especially when regarded as an act of God.
Humanism	Humanists do not believe in a god. They believe it is possible to live a good and fulfilling life without following a traditional religion. They do not follow a holy book either. Instead, Humanists value traits like reason and rely on science to explain the way things are. Humanists believe that people have one life to live - there is no afterlife. As a result, they focus on being happy and making the most of their life. They also believe they have a duty to support others.
monotheistic	Belief in or worship of one god.
polytheistic	Belief in or worship of more than one god.
theism	Belief in the existence of a god or gods, specifically of a creator who intervenes in the universe.



# The nature of God

Christians believe that there is only one God. They are monotheists. There are a number of ways to describe the nature of God from a Christian perspective.



- **Trinity** - most Christians believe that there are **three distinct parts** to this one God and that these three aspects form a unity. This belief is called the doctrine of the Trinity:
  - **God the Father** - the creator and sustainer of all things.
  - **God the Son** - the incarnation of God as a human being, Jesus Christ, on Earth.
  - **God the Holy Spirit** - the aspect of God which is active in the world, drawing people towards God.
- **Holy** - God is 'other', different from anything else - separate and sacred.
- **Omnipotent** - God is all-powerful. Everything consistent with God's nature is possible.
- **Omniscient** - God is all-knowing, of past, present and future.
- **Omnibenevolent** - God is all-good.
- **Omnipresent** - God is present everywhere.
- **Transcendent** - God is also 'outside the world'. God is not active in human affairs. It is up to humans to act in the world on God's behalf.
- **Personal** - individuals can have a personal relationship with God. The Bible often talks of God in human terms, eg as friend, king, parent, and judge.

## Key arguments for the belief in God:

- St Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) argued that everything in the cosmos has a **cause**. If you track things back through a series of causes, there must have been a 'first cause'. He said that this 'first cause' is God. Scientific discoveries, eg the Big Bang theory, can be seen to support the first cause argument.
- The **order, beauty and complexity** in the world is proof of an all-powerful designer (God).
- **Religious experience** - a person may say they have personally 'seen', 'heard' or 'felt' God, or had a prayer answered.
- **Family background** – many people believe (or don't believe) because of their home background.

## Key arguments against the belief in God:

- **Unanswered prayers**.
- The presence of **evil and suffering** in the world.
- Many people are atheists because they think there is **no evidence** for God's existence - or at least no reliable evidence. They argue that a person should only believe in things for which they have good evidence.
- **Science** - Atheists argue that because everything in the universe can be explained in a satisfactory way without using God as part of the explanation, then there is no point in saying that God exists.

## Home Learning Suggestions

Research a Creation story from a religion of your choice – retell it as a comic strip or story map.

2. Choose a quote from the Bible and create a piece of artwork around the quote.
3. Research Humanism and make a poster or leaflet explaining what it is and people's key beliefs.

