Hot Handout

**Heaven, Hell & Purgatory[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Key Words:

conservative Christians – Christians who follow traditional beliefs.

the damned - those who are condemned by God and do not get to heave

doctrine - a belief or teaching – e.g. ‘the doctrine of the Trinity’

Evangelicals - Conservative Christians (usually Protestants) who emphasise the importance of obeying the Bible and preaching the gospel. Famous examples include Martin Luther King, William Wilberforce and John Wesley.

Judgement Day - the end of the world spoken of in the Bible where everyone who has ever lived is judged by God

liberal Christians - Christians (can be Protestant or Catholic) who interpret the Bible non-literally and tend to follow more modern ideas on moral issues – famous examples include Desmond Tutu and Rowan Williams

Purgatory - a place where RC believe people’s sin is removed from them through suffering before they can go to heaven

Revelation - the last book of the Bible which describes the conflicts between God, Satan and the human race, ending with Judgement Day, heaven and hell

the saved - those who have been saved from hell and will get into heaven

sincere - genuine and honest

soul - the personality, mind or spirit of someone

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Heaven, Hell & Purgatory

**A. Heaven**

1. **All Christians:**
2. Heaven is:
	* 1. a place of **perfect happiness**;
		2. **without death or suffering**;
		3. the **dwelling place of God**, angels and holy people.

(Revelation 21-22)

**B. Hell**

 Three views:

1. **Evangelicals:**
	1. Hell is a **lake of fire** into which are cast **the devil** and his demons as a punishment for all eternity.
	2. **Damned people** are thrown into it for all eternity as well. (Revelation 20)
	3. It is the only place in the universe in which **God is not present**.
2. **Annihilationism (mainly liberal Protestants):**
	1. The lake of **fire is purely symbolic**.
	2. A loving **God could not punish** someone so severely for all eternity.
	3. **Souls** of the damned are **annihilated** and cease to exist after being judged by God.
3. **Mediaeval Catholic View:**
	1. Hell is a place where the **devil and demons are in charge** and have fun.
	2. The **damned suffer** various types of torment for eternity.
	3. Dante’s *Inferno*[[2]](#footnote-2) talks about **nine circles** or pits of hell, different for each type of sin.

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**C. Purgatory**

Heaven, Hell & Purgatory

1. **Roman Catholics:**
	1. Purgatory is a place for **people who will eventually go to heaven** but are not good enough to get there yet.
	2. The people there have to wait until all of their **sinfulness is purged** (cleansed) out of them through their sufferings.

 Therefore:

* 1. Catholics **pray for departed friends** and relatives so that they will spend less time suffering in Purgatory.
	2. Protestants and Orthodox Christians do not believe in Purgatory because it is not in the New Testament.

**D. Who is saved and who is damned?**

1. **Conservative Evangelicals:**
	1. Everybody is sinful and therefore **all people are bad** and deserve hell.
	2. Only people who have repented of their sins and accepted the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for them can be saved. In other words, **only true Christians are saved**.
		1. This is **not something Christians deserve** but rather it is a free gift, ‘saved by grace’ because they believed what God said and did for them. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:23)
	3. **Non-christians are damned** because of point a. above.
2. **Liberals:**
	1. **Some people are good** and some are bad.
	2. **The saved** are:
		1. **Christians**;
		2. Sincere followers of **other religions**;
		3. Sincere **atheists and agnostics** who have led a good life.
	3. **The damned** are any people who have been **evil** and failed to love others.

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1. N.b. The views within Christianity on this topic are so many and varied that it is impossible to give them all. This worksheet gives a very simplified summary so that you can remember it all! There are lots of other variations and beliefs that there is not time or space to include here. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A famous mediaeval book about hell. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)