



What you should know about Christian belief

More than half of all Germans feel that they belong to a church, a fact which shows that the Christian faith is a really important foundation for our society. Nevertheless many people no longer share this faith. Many of the tips for living together that we at German Guides (Deutschlandbegleiter) recommend are also found in the Bible. For this reason we would like to give you a brief overview of the Christian faith.

Christians believe in one loving and all-powerful God. He created the whole universe, including us, and he made us in his very own image. Since God created us in order to have a loving relationship with us, he also made us to be free creatures. He wants us to speak to him and to relate to him on his terms, but he lets us decide whether we want to relate to him or not.

People have misused the freedom God created us with to rebel against him, though. That is the reason we have been separated from God. This separation, caused by our rebellion, is what Christians call sin. It destroys the relationship between God and mankind.

Escaping the separation from God

But because God loves us, his creation, he sent his son Jesus into the world to fix our broken relationship and allow us to return to God and have peace with him. The symbol of this repaired relationship is the cross. When Christians kneel in front of a cross, they're not praying to it, but rather showing that they treasure God's forgiveness.

So, the cross is a symbol of God's forgiveness. It reminds us that he loves us and longs for us to return to him. We know that God loves us and wants to fix our broken relationship with him, because on the cross, Jesus offered his life as a payment for our rebellion.



The future in God's presence is certain

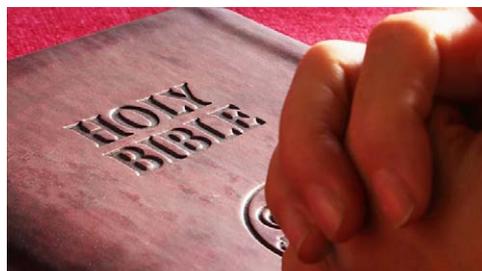
Being a Christian means that a person believes and trusts in this new relationship. Christians admit their sins and are sorry for them, and God forgives them. Our trust leads to a certainty—a certainty that we are saved and will have a future with God that will never end. God promises us this future! We can't and don't want to contradict God.

As Christians we no longer need to be afraid that God will punish us. We have the firm hope that after our physical death we will enter into heaven.



God's promises—promises that are written in the Bible—are the special gift he gives to those who believe. The Bible is Christians' holy book. It is the foundation of the Christian faith, because it teaches us who God is.

Christians believe that the Holy Scriptures are inspired by God and that they tell the whole truth about him. The Bible is our final authority, in questions both of faith and of practical life. Because it was written down by humans, one sometimes hears accusations that it could have become corrupted or changed, but Christians believe that God himself takes care that his Word, the Bible, reaches people without getting mixed-up. Christians believe in one God who has many characteristics—he is all-powerful, he is the father, and he is love.



One God

By the way, Christians do not actually believe in three gods, as some people wrongly assume. We believe in one and only one God, who appears in three different forms: as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This "trinity" is similar to a cube, which has six sides but is still one object. Mary is not involved in the divine trinity in any way. God did not have a sexual relationship with her.

If you would like to know more about our Christian faith, speak to Christians in your area. At our website you'll find a list of churches that you can contact. Or, simply ask the person who pointed you in our direction.