

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION · P4–P6

Religious Traditions in NI

P4–P6 RE

Religion in Northern Ireland

1 Two main Christian traditions

Roman Catholic and Protestant. Approximately 41% Catholic, 38% Protestant, 17% no religion, 1% other religions (2021 census). The two Christian traditions share core beliefs but differ in practice.

2 What Catholics and Protestants share

Belief in one God. The Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Jesus as the Son of God. The Bible as sacred scripture. The Lord's Prayer. The Ten Commandments. Christmas and Easter.

3 Catholic distinctives

The Pope as leader of the Church. Mass with the Eucharist (bread and wine). Seven sacraments. Devotion to saints and the Virgin Mary. Confession (Reconciliation). Rosary.

4 Protestant distinctives

No central religious authority like the Pope. Many Protestant denominations: Church of Ireland (Anglican), Presbyterian Church, Methodist, Baptist, Free Presbyterian. Emphasis on direct relationship with God through the Bible.

5 Other religious communities

Northern Ireland has growing Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and Buddhist communities. Particularly visible in Belfast. NI is more religiously diverse than it has ever been.

6 Religion and identity

In Northern Ireland, religious tradition has historically been linked to political and national identity. This is changing — many people identify with a tradition culturally without being practising believers.



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Shared values

Across traditions: care for neighbours, honesty, kindness, family, looking after those in need.
The values matter as much as the differences.

