Can I understand the Christian belief about sin?

**What is sin?**

Sin is any action or thought that separates humans from God. These actions or thoughts act against what God requests his people to follow, and go against the belief of morality (knowing what is right and wrong).

Sinful thoughts can lead to sinful actions, such as stealing, assault or even murder. Many sinful actions are illegal, whereas some are not. However, Christians believe that even if they are not illegal acts, they are still wrong.

**Is it impossible not to sin?**

This idea is reinforced by the idea of ‘original sin’. This suggests that human beings are born in an in-built likeliness to do wrong and that it cannot be helped. This idea is introduced in the story of Adam and Eve, the first two humans God created, who sinned against God.

**Do we have a choice?**

Many have interpreted the serpent that tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit to represent Satan, who is seen as a force of evil. Christians recognise that humans are tempted to do things that disobey God. Some Christians believe that Satan is constantly trying to tempt humans to disobey God.

Christians believe in a concept called free will – that God gave everyone the ability to choose how to act and live their lives. However, this does not mean that they can do whatever they want. If God does not approve of the actions they decide to take, these will be sinful and separate them from God.

**Setting us free!**

The word ‘salvation’ means to be saved from sin and the consequences of it. This grants Christians eternal life with God. Salvation means that humans are able to get close to God again after sinning – much like the story of Saint Augustine and his early life in the city.

Christians believe that salvation can be achieved in different ways, such as:
- Good works – a person having faith in God and obeying God’s law

- Grace – through faith in Jesus and prayer

Salvation cannot be deserved, but is a gift for the faithful and those who are sorry for their sins.

1. What does the word ‘sin’ mean?
2. What is morality?
3. Why do Christians believe that Satan makes it difficult to not sin?
4. Name two ways in which Christians can achieve salvation.
5. Is it impossible not to sin? Why?