

Worship, Beliefs & Practices



The faith of the Salvationist is often described as being in ‘the mainstream of the Christian faith’.

Because The Salvation Army has such a high profile, the fact that it is an evangelical movement of the Christian Church often escapes attention.

Yet The Salvation Army’s primary motivation in providing practical social service comes from a spiritual base: its first purpose is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with people of all ages, creeds, and colours.

Worship

Every weekend, church services at The Salvation Army endeavour to worship and present the message of Jesus Christ.

All the elements in the service work together and churches use a variety of means to communicate the gospel through Bible message, music (traditional and contemporary), drama and personal experiences.

Family participation in worship is a vital component of church life of The Salvation Army.

In addition to church services, Salvation Army corps provide an extensive range of recreational and support activities for all age groups. Many are designed for families or single adults, while others are specifically designed to appeal to youth, children or the elderly.

SUMMARY BOX

The faith of the Salvationist is described as being in ‘the mainstream of the Christian faith’.

SUMMARY BOX

Salvation Army churches provide a range of fun activities for all age groups, as well as rewarding worship services.



Beliefs

There are 11 doctrines of The Salvation Army, which are the basis of its belief and teaching. These doctrines are expounded in The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.

01. The Bible

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian Faith and practice.

02. God

There is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, who is the only proper object for religious worship.

03. The Trinity

There are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost – undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

04. Jesus Christ

In the person of Jesus Christ, the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

05. Sin from the beginning

Our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience lost their purity and happiness. In consequence of their fall all people have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

06. The atoning work of Jesus

The Lord Jesus Christ has by his suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

07. Repentance for Salvation

Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to Salvation.

08. Justification by faith

Justification is by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and those who believe have the witness in themselves.

09. A continuing faith

Continuance in a state of Salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

10. Holiness

It is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and their whole spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. Eternal reward or punishment

The Salvation Army believes in the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the general judgement at the end of the world; the eternal happiness of the righteous; and the endless punishment of the wicked.

SUMMARY BOX

There are 11 doctrines of The Salvation Army which provide the basis of its belief and teaching.

SUMMARY BOX

Briefly, the 11 doctrines of The Salvation Army deal with:

01. The Bible – inspired Word of God
02. God – one God, Creator and Governor
03. The Trinity (God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit)
04. Jesus Christ as divine and human
05. Sin from the beginning of time
06. The atoning work of Jesus
07. Repentance for Salvation
08. Justification by faith
09. A continuing faith
10. Holiness
11. Eternal reward or punishment.



Practices

Sacraments

Unlike most other Christian denominations, The Salvation Army does not observe the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion. The Army believes it is possible to experience the inward grace of which the sacraments are outward signs, without the need for the rituals themselves.

Christian Festivals

The Army observes the major Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, but the emphasis given to others varies from one country to another.

Another important event is Founder's Day, 2 July, which marks the start of William Booth's preaching campaign in London in 1865 which led to the formation of The Salvation Army. This day is commemorated on the nearest Sunday to 2 July and often features an appeal for candidates to become Salvation Army officers.

Membership

Those who become soldiers (members) of The Salvation Army accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord; accept Salvation Army doctrines; abstain from things that are harmful to body and mind (tobacco, drugs, alcohol, gambling); and are encouraged to serve in the local church.

Many people worship at The Salvation Army without becoming members and without wearing uniform.

Ministry

While accepting the 'ministry of all believers', the Army believes some individuals are called by God to full-time service as His ministers. The Army makes provision for the training and commissioning of officers, who perform similar functions to ordained clergy in other churches.

Women

From the beginning, The Salvation Army has taken a firm stance on the place of women, and has accepted the validity of female ministry. This was largely shaped by Catherine Booth's firm conviction that women should be free to preach the gospel.

Today, women officers are commissioned and appointed on the same terms as men. A married female officer is an officer in her own right, and undertakes the same course of preparatory training as her husband before being commissioned.

SUMMARY BOX

Salvationists do not observe the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion but do observe Christmas and Easter.

SUMMARY BOX

Members of The Salvation Army vow to follow Jesus Christ and abstain from alcohol, tobacco and gambling.

SUMMARY BOX

The Salvation Army trains and commissions individuals to serve God full-time as ministers. All positions of authority in The Salvation Army have always been open to women.