

## Key Concepts

### Creation ex nihilo

The belief that God created the universe 'from nothing'.

### Imago Dei

The belief that humans were created in the image of God.

### Omnipotent

The belief that God is all powerful.

### Stewardship

The belief that humans should protect and preserve the environment and hand more on to the next generation.

### Transcendent

The belief that God exists above and beyond space and time.

### Revelation

The way in which God makes himself known to the world e.g. the Bible.

### Evolution

The gradual change and development of species over time. Associated with Charles Darwin.

### Inspiration

The belief that the writers of the Bible were guided by the Holy Spirit to write what is good and true.

## Forms of Expression: Michelangelo's Creation of Adam & The Tree of Life Mosai

Christianity has a long tradition of sacred art using themes and images from Christian belief. The use of art goes back to the time when people could not read or write. Learning about Jesus or the Bible was made easier by looking at pictures, images, symbols and statues. The artist would use their artwork to express different beliefs about God, humans and the world.



### Michelangelo's Creation of Adam: Beliefs about God

God is presented as a **dynamic and active** figure. He is hard at work at His greatest creation. God reaches out to the more passive figure of Adam. God is shown as older than Adam, with **grey hair and a beard**. God has a **muscular physique**. These show that God is a creator as revealed in the book of Genesis. It also highlights that God is **omnipotent (all-powerful)** as God created the universe. God's age highlights that God is **omniscient (all-knowing)** showing that he has wisdom. His hand stretching out symbolises giving Adam the spark of life. God is also shown on a cloud surrounded by angels. This highlights that God is **transcendent**. Some people believe the cloud represents a brain highlighting omniscience.

### Michelangelo's Creation of Adam: Beliefs about Humans

Adam is on the left of the painting, lying back on the earth from which he has been formed as described in Genesis. This links to the idea of **stewardship** as humans have been created to protect and preserve the environment for future generations. Adam is a perfect human being; young, handsome, strong and resembles God. **Adam mirrors the pose of God**. This is linked to the belief of the **imago dei** which comes from the book of Genesis and the teachings of **Catherine of Siena**.

### Symbols on the Tree of Life Mosaic Apse in San Clemente

The Tree of Life Mosaic can be found in the Apse of the Church of San Clemente in Rome. An apse is a semi-circular dome which is positioned above the altar in a church. It dates to the 12th century. The mosaic is filled with **symbolism**. The central image is a cross which merges with many other important symbols. The **twelve lambs** represent the twelve disciples who were given the task of passing on Jesus' message. The lamb in the centre with a halo represents Jesus who is known as the lamb of God who sacrificed his life. The **tree and vines** are symbolic of how the message of Christianity will grow and spread throughout the world. The tree is the tree of life and vines/branches will grow as Jesus' message is passed on. The **hand** represents God reaching out to his son Jesus and taking him to heaven. Following Jesus' death on the cross it is believed that Jesus rose again. The hand shows God's power to overcome death. The **Alpha and Omega** are the first and last Greek letters of the alphabet. They symbolise the Christian belief that God is eternal. This means that God has always existed and will always exist. He has no beginning or end. This **Chi-Rho** is a Greek term for Christ. It is one of the earliest Christian symbols and links to the belief that Jesus is a saviour.

## Exam Practice

b) Describe 2 symbols in the Tree of Life mosaic and what they represent. (5)