



Fact sheet: Faith

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Faith has been a part of the Island's life from the beginning. The first Portuguese sailors to visit the Island used wood from a damaged carrack ship to construct a chapel, the second Christian church built south of the equator. This gave Jamestown valley its local name of Chapel valley.

The Island's first Religious leaders were Anglican Chaplains sent here by the East India Company. Between 1671 and 1830, 11 of the 18 chaplains were recorded as 'drunk' or 'quarrelsome' or both.

During the 19th century the Island's religion diversified with the arrival of Baptist, Roman Catholic and Salvation Army churches. The Anglican Church was strengthened by the creation of the St Helena diocese and the arrival of the Island's first bishop in 1859. Churches were actively involved in education and social reform.

Today there are many religious beliefs on the Island. The 1998 census recorded at least 12 practicing religious groups.