Religion in Elizabethan England

The two major religions in Elizabethan England were the Catholic and Protestant religions. The convictions and beliefs in these different religions were so strong that they led to the executions of many adherents to both of these.

Elizabethan religions.
- Reigning Monarchs dictated the 'favoured' religion!
- Schools taught the official religion decreed by the reigning Queen or King
- Failure to adhere to the 'favoured' religion could often lead to great danger - Imprisonment! Torture! Execution!
- Adhering to the 'wrong' religion brought risks to personal wealth, freedom and life
- Queen Mary I (r.1553-1558), Elizabeth's sister, believed passionately in the Catholic religion and persecuted Protestants who were burned alive for their beliefs (hence her nickname Bloody Mary)
- Queen Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603) succeeded her sister Queen Mary and adhered to the Protestant religion and restored Protestantism as the official religion. She did, however, firmly believe that people should be allowed to practice the Catholic religion without fear of recrimination so long as it presented no threat to peace in the realm and her rule over England. There were, however, many Catholic plots against Queen Elizabeth I - many Catholics wanted to replace Elizabeth with her cousin Mary Queen of Scots. These plots eventually led to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots (http://bit.ly/LAs0Yr)

PROTESTANT VERSUS CATHOLIC RELIGION
- In the early 1500's the people of England all practiced the Roman Catholic religion. The practices of the
Catholic religion were questioned during the Reformation and the beliefs of men such as the German Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) prompted a new religion called Protestantism...

- The term 'Protestant' was adopted when supporters of Martin Luther formally protested against efforts to limit the spread of Luther's new ideas
- So what were the differences between the Catholic and Protestant religion and beliefs in Elizabethan England?

CHURCH SERVICES & THE BIBLE
- Elizabethan Catholics believed that Church Services and the Bible should be in Latin, as it had been for 1000 years
- Elizabethan Protestants believed that Church Services and the Bible should be in the language of the people so that the ordinary people could understand them

THE PRIESTS
- Elizabethan Catholics firmly believed that Priests were the link between God and the people and that the Pope was ordained by God.
- Catholic Priests were viewed as special and expected to devote their lives to God and remain unmarried and wear elaborate robes
- Elizabethan Protestants believed that people could find God without a priest or a Pope and that Ministers were ordinary people who should lead normal lives and wear ordinary robes

SINS
- Elizabethan Catholics believed that Priests and the Pope were able to forgive sins - at a price. Gifts, or indulgences, were given to the church
- Elizabethan Protestants believed that only God could forgive sins
ELIZABETHAN CHURCHES
• Catholics believed that Churches celebrate God and elaborately decorated with statues and shrines
• Protestants believed that Churches should be plain allowing the people to concentrate on the sermons