

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is a Protestant denomination of the Christian Church with over 1.6 million members in 109 countries.

In the UK there are over 800 Salvation Army parishes (known as *corps*), over 1,500 ordained ministers (known as *officers*) and 54,000 members (including senior soldiers, adherents and junior soldiers).

Salvation Army officers wear a military-style uniform, though some officers may wear a more informal uniform when undertaking certain duties. Members of the church often choose to wear a uniform, but are not required to do so.

The Salvation Army is famous for its work with people who have fallen on hard times: it offers help to the elderly, the young, offenders, and blind and disabled people; it provides food and shelter for the homeless and operates food distribution centres. The Army's social work is a religious activity. Members of the Army are inspired by their belief in a loving and caring God to show their love for humanity and their practical response to human need. In this they follow the teachings of Jesus.

William Booth

The Salvation Army was formed in 1865, the East End of London, by William Booth, a former Methodist minister. Booth was an evangelist who wanted to offer practical help to the poor and destitute as well as preaching the Gospel to them. It was originally called the Christian Mission, but changed its name to the Salvation Army in 1878.

A Salvation Army

Since Booth saw his movement as fighting a spiritual battle against the forces of sin it was logical that he should adopt a military metaphor that had a long history in Christianity.



Marching band wearing an old style of Salvation Army uniform - other kinds of music are also used in modern services

Sacraments

The Salvation Army does not recognise any sacraments, such as baptism or communion, as essential. The Salvation Army places the emphasis on personal faith and on a spiritual relationship with God which doesn't depend on anything external.

Salvation Army symbols

The motto - Blood and Fire

The motto emphasises key points of Salvation Army belief:

- 'Blood' for the death of Jesus which saved Christians from sin
- 'Fire' for the power of the Holy Spirit which helps Christians live holy lives.



The badge

The Salvation Army badge symbolises the important features of the faith.

- The 'S' in the centre stands for salvation
- The cross represents the death of Jesus
- The swords represents the fight against sin
- The surrounding shape of the sun represents the fire and light of the Holy Spirit
- The crown reminds Salvationists that Heaven is the reward of all those who love and serve God

The flag

The flag consists of a blue border surrounding a red background, in the centre of which is a yellow star. The flag bears the Army's motto 'Blood and Fire'.

- The blue border represents holiness - the holiness of God and the holy lives Christians are called to live
- Red is a reminder of Jesus' blood shed when he was crucified, and his death that freed humanity from sin
- The yellow star represents the power of the Holy Spirit



Worship

Salvation Army meetings are open to anyone - you don't have to be a Salvationist or even a Christian to attend.

Meetings don't have a set order of service. They usually include plenty of hymns and songs, and there may be group or individual music items. Occasionally a dance or drama group may be used to help with the worship. Verses from the Bible are read in every meeting. Music may be provided by the local Salvation Army band or by the choir (who are called the 'Songsters').

An officer usually leads the meeting and gives the 'address' (sermon), but other people can do both or may be invited to take part by praying, reading out verses of hymns or from the Bible, or by giving 'testimonies' in which they talk about their experience of God.