English Settlement of 1559 – background information

On coming to Power Elizabeth returned the country to a Protestant state. On reaching the Elizabethan Settlement she effectively set down the foundations for the Anglican church.

The main features of the settlement included:

* The sovereign became the ‘Supreme Governor’ of the Church, not the leader (this satisfied more moderate Catholics and those who didn’t believe a woman could be head of a church)
* The Book of Common Prayer was reinstated, in English
* Attendance at church on a Sunday was compulsory, any Catholics refusing to go were to be heavily fined
* Bread and wine was to be distributed to everyone during communion
* Priests were allowed to marry
* Elizabeth appointed moderate Protestant priests, rather than extreme ones who were more likely to offend Catholics
* Elizabeth allowed the symbolism of the bread and wine at communion to be open to interpretation (some parts of the common book of prayer suggested it represented Christ, other parts suggested that it turned into the body and blood of Christ for ‘true believers’)