

# Christian Symbols and What They Mean

Christianity uses pictures and symbols to help people remember important ideas about God, Jesus, and how to live. Here are some of the most common symbols and simple explanations for each.

## • 1. The Cross

The cross is the most known Christian symbol. It reminds Christians that Jesus died on a cross. Many also see it as a sign of love and hope because Christians believe Jesus rose again (came back to life).

## • 2. The Crucifix

A crucifix is a cross that has a small statue or picture of Jesus on it. It helps people remember how Jesus suffered and died. Some Christian groups (like Catholics) use the crucifix more than an empty cross.

## • 3. Ichthys (The Fish)

The fish symbol looks like two curved lines that meet. Long ago, Christians used it as a secret sign to say "I am a Christian." The Greek word for fish (ichthys) was also used as a short code that stands for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior."

## • 4. The Dove

The dove often stands for the Holy Spirit (part of God in Christian belief) and also peace. It comes from stories where the Holy Spirit came like a dove when Jesus was baptized.

## • 5. The Lamb

Jesus is sometimes called the "Lamb of God." A lamb is gentle and innocent, and the symbol reminds Christians that Jesus was willing to give himself to save people.

## • 6. Alpha and Omega

These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (A and Ω). They mean God is the beginning and the end of everything.

## • 7. Chi-Rho

Chi (X) and Rho (P) are the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ. Put together they make a symbol that stands for Jesus Christ.

## • 8. Bread and Wine

Bread and wine are used in a Christian ceremony called Communion or the Eucharist. They remind Christians of Jesus' last meal with his friends and of sharing life with God and each other.

## • 9. Crown of Thorns

This shows the crown made of thorns that people put on Jesus before he died. It reminds Christians of Jesus' suffering and sacrifice.

## • 10. The Good Shepherd

Pictures of Jesus as a shepherd holding a sheep remind Christians that Jesus cares for people like a shepherd cares for sheep — guiding and protecting them.

## • 11. Anchor

The anchor is a symbol of hope and safety. Long ago, some Christians used it to show they trusted God when times were hard.

**Quick reminder:** Different Christian groups (like Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant) sometimes use different symbols or show them in different ways. But most of these symbols help people think about what Christians believe about Jesus, God, love, and hope.

**Try this activity:** Draw one of the symbols you like and write one sentence about what it means to you. That helps you remember the idea behind the symbol.