

<b>Secret Signs of Christians</b>	<b>KS2</b>	<b>No. of lessons: 3+</b>
<p><b>Learning objectives:</b> To understand that Christians have always been ready to suffer for their belief in Jesus. To explore the historical context in which the stories of Jesus were first handed down. To explore Christian symbolism.</p>		
<p><b>Questions for reflection:</b> Is there anyone I care so much about that I would be prepared to suffer for knowing them? Can I keep a secret?</p>		
<p><b>Activities and experiences:</b> <i>In the first two centuries of the Christian Church the Christians were persecuted for their beliefs – as a result they developed a vocabulary of symbols for Christ which were also used as secret signs. The symbols all tell us something about what Christians have believed about Jesus from the earliest days. Three of the very earliest symbols are suggested here, but you could use a symbol dictionary to find others.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Watch any of the Storykeepers videos to set the scene of the Neronian persecutions (see video list). Talk about secret signs, passwords and signals in our own culture and how they are used to recognise members of your own group, perhaps in times of danger.</li> <li>◆ Introduce the Christian symbols of the fish and the anchor. In small groups discuss what an enemy of the Christians would think it meant if they just saw this sign scratched in the dust without any explanation. Try and work out why Christians might have used them and what special meaning or teaching the signs could have for them – the anchor is easier to guess than the fish, although pupils might remember that the first disciples of Jesus were fishermen. Check a symbol dictionary for the meaning. What does the symbol tell us Christians believed about Jesus?</li> <li>◆ Devise other simple symbols which Christians might be able to use today either incorporating the cross (as does the anchor) or acting as a mnemonic to teach about Jesus (as does the ichthus fish). Check the symbols dictionaries to see if Christians already use this sign or whether you have had a fresh idea!</li> <li>◆ Introduce the swastika. This was in general use as a Christian cross until the Nazis took it as their own particular symbol. Use this to think about how the meaning of symbols can change over centuries and discuss whether your secret Christian signs will stand the test of time.</li> <li>◆ You may like to finish this scheme by referring again to the persecutions and sharing a story of a modern martyr who has stood up for their Christian faith.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Websites:</b> Christian symbols on-line at <a href="http://home.rochester.rr.com/gocek/images/christn/">http://home.rochester.rr.com/gocek/images/christn/</a> For modern Christian martyrs see: <a href="http://www.culham.ac.uk/cw/assemblies/001p_romero.php">http://www.culham.ac.uk/cw/assemblies/001p_romero.php</a> <a href="http://www.gospelweb.net/modmartyrsindex2.htm">http://www.gospelweb.net/modmartyrsindex2.htm</a> <a href="http://www.cptryon.org/cpexams/bossilkov/bio.html">http://www.cptryon.org/cpexams/bossilkov/bio.html</a></p>		