Hands On Learning
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CHRISTIANITY H230/A

Crucifix



Christianity has its origin in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. A crucifix shows the suffering of Jesus as he died on the cross. Crucifixion images are used to emphasize that God, in Jesus, is not a distant being, but shares in the pain which is part of human life.

The label above Jesus' head has the letters 'INRI' on it. This is because the Gospel of John tells us that Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who had Jesus killed, ordered that an inscription reading 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews' should be nailed onto the cross. 'INRI' is an abbreviation of the Latin version of this inscription - 'Iesvs Nazarenvs Rex Ivdaeorvm'.

The style of this crucifix shows that it comes from the Roman Catholic tradition. The Christian church is diverse. The Orthodox (Greek speaking) and Roman Catholic churches (Latin speaking) went their separate ways in AD 1054. Protestant churches trace their origin to the protests of Martin Luther against Roman Catholic teaching and practice in 1517. This crucifix is part of a set which includes two candleholders and candles, and a plastic bottle to contain holy water. They would have been used together by a priest when visiting a sick person who was unable to get to church, so that they might receive Holy Communion in their home. Holy water is water that has been blessed by a priest and which people sprinkle over themselves to seek God's favour.

Plain Cross



This cross is made from olive wood, from the Holy Land, the place where Jesus lived. Most Protestant churches generally display a plain cross like this one, without the body of Jesus.

IHS Plaque



These three letters are often seen in churches. They simply represent a shortened form of the Greek for Jesus, **IH**ESUS. Abbreviated names like this were often used on manuscripts and inscriptions in the early years of the church. Later the initials were said to represent the Latin phrase 'I**h**esus **H**ominum **S**alvator', (Jesus, Saviour of Mankind). A modern interpretation is 'In His Service'.

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Bible



The Christian Bible has two parts. The Old Testament contains those writings which Christianity shares with Judaism. The New Testament contains the Gospels - books about the life of Jesus - and other documents which derive from the earliest days of the church. The books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek.

This Bible is written in English. One of the disagreements between Protestants and Roman Catholics was that the Latin language was used for both worship and the Bible in the Roman Catholic church. They felt this hindered ordinary people who did not know Latin from learning about Jesus. The Roman Catholic church in England started to use English in worship in the 1960s. This translation of the Bible was made by Ronald Knox, a Roman Catholic priest (and detective story writer), who worked on it from the 1930s to the 1950s. Father Knox used St Jerome's fourth century Latin Bible (called the Vulgate), which had remained the official Catholic version for many centuries, rather than the original Greek

Japanese Gospel of Mark



This translation of the Gospel of Mark into Japanese was produced in 1945 by the Japan Bible Society. There are many Bible Societies around the world, all belonging to the Protestant tradition.

Quest Bible Study Booklet



Protestant churches encourage their members to read the Bible at home. A booklet like this is provided to help people reflect on the passages that they read each day.

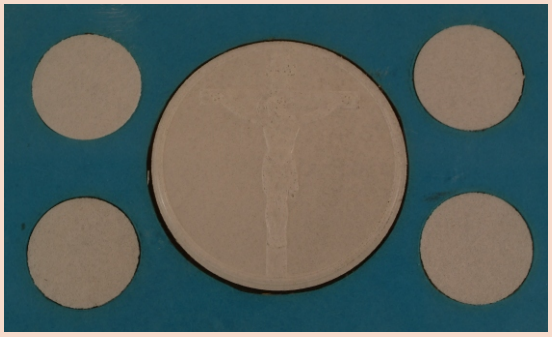
Rosary Beads

The rosary is a devotional practice which is found in the Roman Catholic church. A rosary is often given to a child in the Roman Catholic church at the time of their first communion. A set of Rosary beads usually contains 50 beads in groups of ten (a decade), with an additional large bead before each decade. A rosary is used to help people count their way through a sequence of prayers and meditations all of which involve reciting the Lord's Prayer, followed by ten recitations of the Hail Mary prayer: 'Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.'

Because Protestants reject veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, use of the rosary is rare in that tradition. Orthodox Christians tend to use a prayer rope - a woollen loop with 100 knots - to help them say the Jesus Prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'



Communion Wafers



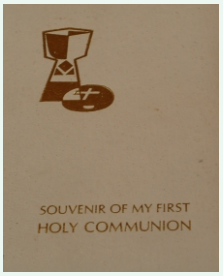
Holy Communion, the Mass, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper are all names for an act of worship in which Christians participate in a symbolic meal of bread and wine. Jesus held such a meal on the night before he was arrested. In repeating the meal Christians look back to the events 2000 years ago, affirm their communion with each other in the present, and look forward to life in Heaven with Jesus.

The earliest such meals, which are described in the letters of Saint Paul, were clearly proper meals, in which Christians could eat their fill. Over time the meals have become purely symbolic and differences between the churches over how to celebrate them have increased.

These communion wafers belong to the Roman Catholic tradition. The larger one is held in the air by a priest and then broken as he says the words, 'In the night that he was betrayed, he broke the bread and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body which is shed for you and for many in remembrance of me'. The smaller wafers are given to the rest of the congregation. Orthodox churches use unleavened bread and Jean Calvin (1509-1564) re-introduced the practice of using ordinary loaves of bread into the Protestant tradition.

Holy Communion Souvenir Book

This book has many pictures from the 1970s of a Roman Catholic Mass in Belgium. It was produced as a souvenir for children when they took part in their first communion.



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Holy Communion has always been viewed as special. In both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches children first had to be taught about Christian beliefs before being allowed to join in. There is a movement in some churches today to allow anyone of any age to freely take part in communion, as long as they have been baptised. This has always been the practice in the Orthodox church, where babies and children are given communion.

Communion Medallion



This medallion is also a first communion souvenir. It shows a chalice (a cup which holds the wine) and, at the top of the cup, a communion wafer. The same image is used on the packaging.

Confirmation Veil



In most churches children are baptised when they are babies. Through baptism people become members of the church. Confirmation takes place when the children have grown up enough to accept their membership of the church. The ceremony is led by the local bishop, who places his hands on the head of each child and blesses them. In the Roman Catholic church children make their first confession and communion at around 7 or 8. They are generally confirmed at 11 or 12. Girls are often dressed in white and wear a veil like this when they participate in these ceremonies.

Communion Cups



Ways of celebrating communion differ widely from church to church and over time. One of the disputes between Roman Catholics and Protestants was over whether ordinary people should be allowed to drink the wine in a communion service. Protestants believed that everyone should be allowed to receive both, but Roman Catholics had developed a practice in which ordinary people only received the bread. In the Orthodox church, on the other hand, the bread was (and is) dipped into the wine and served to the people on a spoon.

These small cups are a product of nineteenth century Free Church communion practice. (Free Churches - also called Nonconformists - are the Protestant church in England outside the official Church of England; Methodists, United Reformed and Baptists all belong to this category). They were introduced for health reasons, rather than because of theology. Tuberculosis was widespread in

the nineteenth century and it was believed that sharing a chalice to drink the wine helped to spread this, and other, diseases. Such small glasses do, however, allow everyone in the church to drink the wine at the same moment, rather than having to queue up and take it individually. They would also have almost certainly been used to contain non-alcoholic wine. Nonconformists were prominent in campaigning against alcohol addiction and many vowed never to drink it.

Plastic Madonna & Child and Mary Water Bottle



Mary the mother Jesus is venerated in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic traditions. She is viewed as an example of deep humility and tendeness. Both Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians believe that Mary, like all other saints in heaven, continues to pray for people here on earth. Protestants do not venerate saints, including Mary, because they think worship should focus solely on Jesus, who alone will answer prayers. All Christian traditions use examples of people from the bible and from history to teach people how to live faithful and good lives.

The plastic bottle in the shape of Mary comes from Lourdes in France. The fame of Lourdes is founded on the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin to a poor, fourteen-year-old girl, Bernadette Soubiroux in1858. Lourdes became a place of pilgrimage for the sick and water from the spring near where the visions took place is reputed to have miraculous powers of healing. Many pilgrims take some of the spring water home with them in bottles such as this one.

Two Icons



There has always been debate in the Christian church about the place of images and statues in churches. Images of God are forbidden in Judaism and the early church strongly distinguished itself from the worship of Roman and Greek gods, who were widely represented by images and statues. In the Orthodox church all imagery was forbidden for periods in the eighth and ninth centuries. Eventually a compromise was reached and today Orthodox churches allow images, but do not allow statues.

Orthodox churches often have many images like these, known by their Greek name icons. One of the icons shows Mary and Jesus in a composition known as Our Lady of Vladimir, or the Mother of Tenderness. In icons of this type the Jesus nestles tenderly close to his mother, he gazes at her and is so closely linked to her that his left arm embraces her fully. His right hand gently touches her left cheek. The earliest known example of this type dates from the twelfth century and was commissioned in Constantinople by a Russian. In 1169, Duke Andrej Bogoljubskij had the icon brought from Kiev to the new cathedral of Vladimir. There are now thousands of representations of the Vladimir icon. It is said that there is no Orthodox Church, nor Orthodox home's religious corner, without this image somewhere represented.

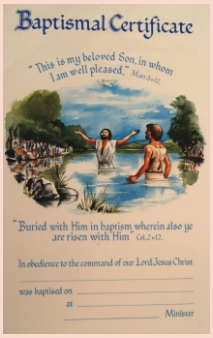
Other icons show Christian saints or stories from the bible. The second example in this box shows the last supper. St John always sits beside Jesus. The figure dipping into the dish is Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus ('Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me'". Matthew 26:23).

Baptism Candle



In many churches parents hold a lit candle like this to symbolize to symbolise that the child has passed over from darkness to light. This candle has various symbols on it. The dove refers to Jesus's baptism in the River Jordan: 'When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."' (Luke 3.20-22). The shell beside it is also a symbol of baptism. It refers to the practice in some churches of using a shell to pour the water over the baptised child.

Baptism Certificate



This certificate probably come from a church in the Baptist tradition. Baptists believe it is wrong for babies to be baptised. Rather, only those who understand what they are doing and who voluntarily ask to be baptised should do so. Baptist churches do not have a small font for baptising babies, but often have a purpose built tank in which adults can be fully immersed under the water. Sometime baptisms take place in the open-air in rivers, as at Jesus's own baptism which is shown on this certificate. On occasion even large skips have been used to provide an improvised baptismal tank.

Miniature Paschal Candle

Paschal means Easter. Paschal candles are lit in the first service on Easter Sunday the day when Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. The church is often dark. A very large paschal candle is lit and then the church is filled with light as other smaller candles are lit too. The light symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Prayers are said such as, 'May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds. The lit candle is now a symbol of Christ, risen as the light of the world, and come into the midst of the people.' This small paschal candle has a Chi-Rho symbol in red on it. The Chi-Rho symbol is made up of the first two letters of the name Christ in Greek, Chi (which looks like an X) and Rho (which looks like a P). The symbol became popular after the Emperor Constantine became a Christian in AD 312, as he claimed to have seen a vision of it in the sky. It also once had the letters Alpha and Omega (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, although only the A is still present. This refers to the Risen Jesus who, in the last book of Bible, is referred to as the Alpha and the Omega ('I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End', Revelation 22.13). These two letters are on the front and back cover of the Bible in this box.

Charcoal and Frankincense





Frankincense - the dried sap from a tree which grows in East Africa and Arabia - is melted, using charcoal, in Roman Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant church such as the Church of England. As it melts it gives off clouds of sweet smelling smoke. The sweet scents heighten the experience of worshipping in church and are often taken as symbolic of the prayers of the people which are offered to God.

Palm Cross



Palm Crosses like this one are given out in many churches on Palm Sunday - the Sunday before Easter Sunday - which commemorates Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, when the crowds threw palm leaves on the ground beneath the feet of the donkey on which he rode. In some churches the palm crosses of the previous year are burned on Ash Wednesday, at the beginning of Lent, and a cross is marked on the forehead of worshippers with this ash as a sign of their sorrow.

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Lent Box



Lent is the period of forty days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. For many Christians, Lent is traditionally a period of fasting and repentance in preparation for Easter, although not all churches observe Lent significantly. Boxes like this are often distributed in churches during this period so that worshipers can express their repentance through donations to charity.

Order of Service for a Marriage and a Selection of Cards



Many significant events in a Christian's life are celebrated in church. This order of service is from a marriage celebrated in a Baptist church. The cards in this box are from a variety of personal and ritual events.

Photograph of Pope John Paul II



The Pope is the Bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic church. For the first thousand years of the church's life there were several senior bishops, such as the Bishop of Alexandria and the Bishop of Antioch. These bishops do not accept the seniority of the Bishop of Rome and they have authority over the community of churches which today we call Orthodox. The Bishop of Alexandria, for example, is also called the Pope, but in his case he is head of the Coptic Orthodox church, which is the ancient Christian church of Egypt. John Paul II was Pope from 1978 to 2005.

Fish Badge



Christians often wear a fish badge like this, or have it on their cars or houses. The fish was used a symbol of Christian faith well before Christianity became the official Roman religion in the fourth century. It was used because the phrase 'Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour' in Greek is written 'Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ'. The first letter of each of these five words spells ΙΧΘΥΣ, which means 'fish' in Greek. This word is written down the centre of this badge.