

Christmas Symbols



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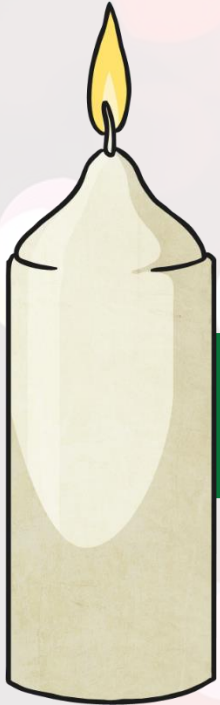
What Is a Symbol?

A symbol is a sign, shape or object with a special meaning that is used to represent something else.

Symbols are often used in religious events and festivals.



Christmas Symbols



Christmas traditions often have great symbolic meaning, developed over time.



Many objects are used for their symbolism for Christians at Christmas.

Before the birth of Christianity, Pagans had already been gathering together for festivals. They also used objects for their symbolism.



Christmas in Colours

Colours that we often associate with Christmas have their own meanings and symbolism.

Each of these colours symbolises a Christian belief:

Red

The colour red symbolises Jesus' blood and sacrifice on the cross..

White

White is believed to represent Jesus' innocence, purity and holiness.

Green

For many Christians, green represents eternal life in Christ.

Gold

It is believed that gold represents royalty and Christ as the King

Fir Trees

Fir trees, also known as Christmas trees, are evergreens. This means that they stay green all year round and the leaves – or needles – don't fall off.

What do you think fir trees represent?

For many Christians, the fir tree is a symbol of God's everlasting life and love.

Traditionally, Pagans would cut branches of evergreen trees and bushes, bring them into their homes and decorate them with ornaments. For them, the trees were used as a reminder that the spring would come after the winter.



Holly

With its sharp thorns, glossy green leaves and striking red berries, holly is a common sight during the winter months. Often, it is used as decoration, inside and outside of the home.

What do you think holly represents?

Holly is symbolic in Christianity because it represents the crown of thorns that Jesus wore when he was crucified on the cross.

Many Pagans also believed that holly would keep bad spirits away and provide protection.



The Star

Stars are often seen at the top of Christmas trees and they are also frequently spotted on Christmas cards and other festive decorations.

What do you think the star represents?

In Christianity, the Star of Bethlehem is believed to have led the Three Wise Men to the stable where Jesus was lying in the manger. The Bible says that the travellers saw the star in the east and then they followed it all the way to Bethlehem.

The star is also considered to be a symbol of hope.



Candles

Candles are a lovely sight around Christmastime, and they can be seen everywhere, from restaurants to churches to people's homes.

What do you think candles represent?

For many Christians, candles represent Jesus who is often called the Light of the World. Some also believe that candles symbolise the light from the star of Bethlehem.

Many Pagans used candles to bring heat and light during the dark winter months. They could also be used to welcome the light that will come in the spring.



Mistletoe

The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe dates back to the Roman festival of Saturnalia, where it was believed that it was good luck to kiss beneath the mistletoe.

What do you think mistletoe represents?

For many, mistletoe is a symbol of life during the winter months when many natural things seem to have died away. Before its association with kissing, Pagans would decorate their homes with mistletoe and as they believed it would keep them safe and in good health.



Yule Log

Originally, a yule log was a tree cut down and stripped of its branches. It was then kept alight in the fire for the twelve days of Christmas. Today, we are more likely to see a yule log made of cake and chocolate!

What do you think a yule log represents?

Many believed that the yule log was burned as a symbol of prosperity and luck. It was also believed that it would keep the people in the household safe



Your Turn

Can you think of any other Christmas symbols?

Do you know what they represent?





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