

Young Apprentices

A RESOURCE FOR THE OCIA

INQUIRY SESSION: SYMBOLS



My Story

When you were very, very young, did you have a favorite blanket? Did you like it so much that you carried it with you everywhere? Was it warm and soft? Maybe you used it when you napped. Beyond what it looked and felt like, perhaps that blanket meant safety to you.



AND THINK

- *What other ordinary objects mean something to you beyond what they look like?*



God's Story

Catholics use certain objects that have a special meaning to us. Beyond what they look like, they speak a special message to us. Two such objects are water and candles.

Holy water fills our baptismal fonts and is often also in containers at the doors of the church. When we pass by the holy water, we sign ourselves as we pray the Sign of the Cross. This reminds us of our Baptism.

Candles are lit in our church to remind us that Christ is the Light of the world. He drives away the darkness and fills our lives with the light of faith. His Good News brings light to the whole world.



Our Response

Holy water and lighted candles are symbols. Water is more than something that is wet. A candle is more than something that burns. Each has a deeper meaning for people of faith.



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- *Name each of the symbols on the prayer table today.*
- *Share what that object means to people of faith.*

Sharing God's Word

With your family, read one or more of the Scriptures listed below. Share what each passage says about symbols.

Genesis 9:13

(The bow in the sky)

Exodus 13:21

(The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire)

Acts 2:3

(Tongues of fire)

The above readings are available at usccb.org/bible/readings.

Faith Words

Paschal (Easter) candle

This is the large candle that is lit from the new fire at the Easter Vigil. It shines as a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the world. Baptismal candles are lit from the Paschal candle.

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Symbols help us to understand what we cannot see. The Church uses many symbols to speak of God's presence in her midst. Water and candles (light) are two such symbols.

Symbols of Faith

Many interesting and unusual symbols of our faith are portrayed in a church's artwork. In the coming week, take time to walk around the church with your family. Look at the church windows, art, and images for the following:

Symbols of the Blessed Trinity

(A triangle, shamrock, or three interlocking circles or arcs)

Symbols of the Holy Spirit

(A dove, fire, flames, or wind)

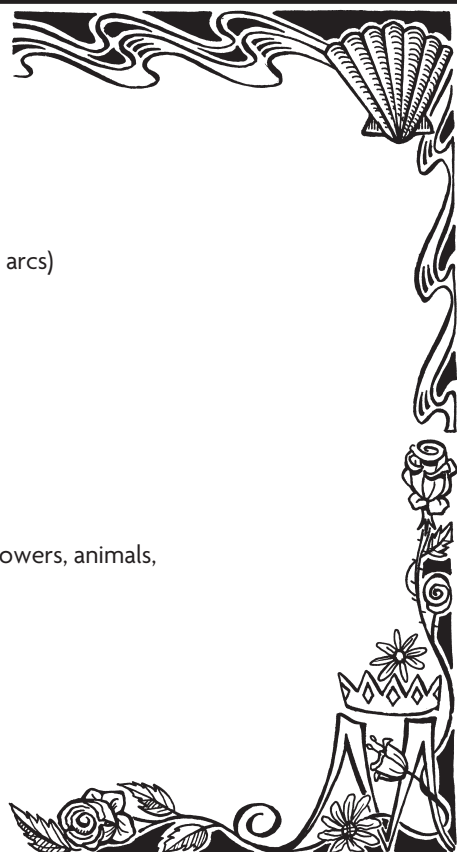
Symbols of Mary

(A gold crown, an iris, a rose [Mystical Rose])

Symbols of the Saints

(Images of the saints and special symbols in artwork, such as flowers, animals, crosses, books and scrolls, shells, and harps)

Make a list of the symbols you find, and share your findings with the group the next time it gathers. You may wish to do an internet search for the meaning of some of the symbols you find before you come to the next session.



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