

You are a CHRISTIAN in the Early Church-

In order to find the location and time of the worship service you had to identify other Christians to know who to ask. But you had to be very careful because if you are caught, you will be put in prison and martyred! Therefore, to identify other Christians, those who were Christians used the Ichthus (fish) symbol to identify each other. They would do this by writing in the air, in the dirt, etc

An Ichthus symbol looks like this:



One person would begin this symbol like this:



If the other person was a Christian, they would finish the symbol like this:



Thus, the finished symbol would look like this:



When Christians identified each other they knew that they were then free to talk to each other. But they had to be very careful not to congregate in groups with other Christians. They had to make sure that they were not followed to the secret worship service or the entire group could be imprisoned and killed!

If one was caught then they had to make the decision whether to defend their faith and be martyred or to bow and worship the emperor to save themselves.

*ELDERS, make sure each one in your group know how to make this symbol of identification. Practice during your time together.

Another method of identifying where the secret meeting was to be was to fly a kite! Yes, the color of the kite and it's tails would tell the neighborhood where the meeting was to be held. One cannot say exactly how long kits have been around but earliest writings describing a kite were found in China and are believed to be over 2500 years old. (And we think of the kite as a "modern day" invention.) At the Marketplace one can see how to make a sled kite using dowel rods, a garbage bag, some tape and a straw.

Symbol Used in Days of Early Church



The FISH (ICHTHUS) was a common and easily recognizable symbol for “Jesus Christ” and later came to mean “Christian” or “Follower of Christ.” It represented “Jesus” because the five letters of the word “fish” in Greek provide an acrostic or first letters of the phrase “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

ΙΧΘΥΣ (Pronounced ICHTHUS) is the Greek word for “Fish”.

This symbol appeared on the walls of some of the catacombs of early Christians, where Jesus is represented or pictured in the drawings as a FISH. It is unknown exactly when the symbol was first used, but it became a secret symbol of Communication used by the early Christians to identify one another during times of persecution.

To read this cryptogram, one must arrange vertically the letters of the Greek word for “fish” and then used each one as the initial of another word as follows:

Ιησους	- Iesus	- Jesus
Χριστος	- Christos	- Christ
Θεου	- Theou	- Of God
Υιος	- Uios	- Son
Σωτηρ	- Soter	- Saviour