

World Beliefs Symbols

Introducing the main symbols of the six major world religions, humanism and environmentalism.

Your Task

1. Read about the symbols of the major world beliefs.
2. Create a poster or a mini booklet to show your learning.

* Diving Deeper Challenge: Create a new, appropriate symbol for one of the beliefs.

What is a symbol?

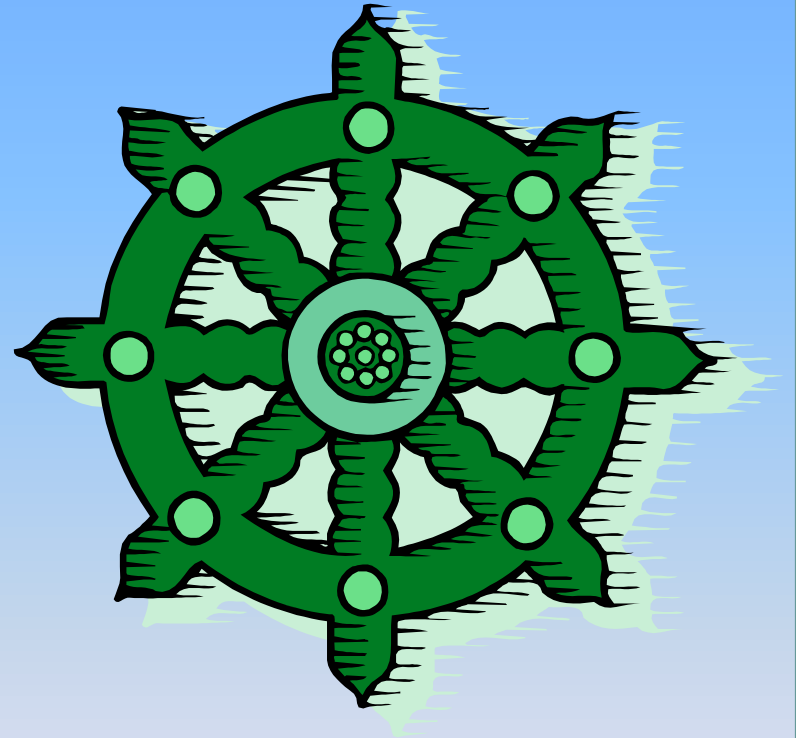
A symbol is a mark or character used to represent something.

Do you know what each of these symbols represents?

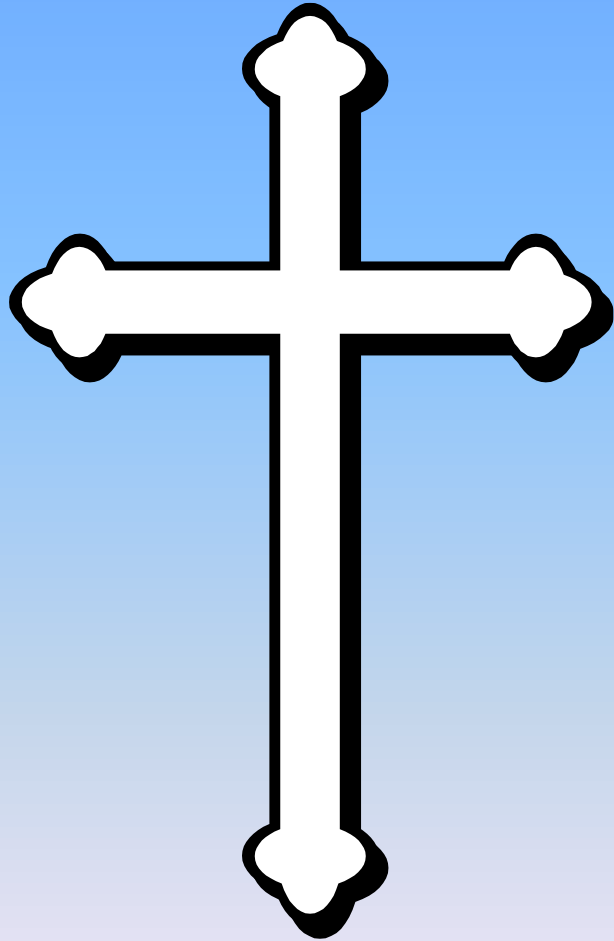


The Wheel of Law

- Buddhism
 - The major symbol used for Buddhism is a wheel called 'the Wheel of Law'.
 - It represents the Buddhist teaching of the 'Noble Eightfold Path'.
 - Each spoke of the wheel represents a different truth.



The Cross



- **Christianity**
- The major symbol used for Christianity is the cross. This is because Jesus died on the cross and after he died he came back to life.
- The cross is a symbol of life and death.
- Some Christians like to wear a cross so that people know they belong to that faith group.

Aum /Om

- **Hinduism**
- The major symbol used for Hinduism is the symbol of 'Om'.
- 'Om' is a special word said at the beginning and end of a prayer.
- It is made up of Sanskrit letters; Sanskrit is a very old language.



The Crescent Moon and the Star

- **Islam**
- The major symbol of Islam is a crescent moon with a star.
- Many early Muslims lived in the desert, an important way to find their way around at night was by using the moon and stars.
- The symbol represents how Islam guides people and shows them how to live.



The Star of David



- Judaism
- The major symbol of Judaism is a star, which has six points.
- It is called 'The Star of David' or the 'Magen David.'
- David was a very important Jewish king but no one knows where the symbol first came from.

The Khanda



- Sikhism
- The major symbol used for Sikhism is a symbol, which is made up of three parts.
- Two swords represent the fact that Sikhs must fight for what is right.
- Then there is a circle to represent that God has no end or beginning. Finally there is a sword called the Khanda, a double-edged sword which represents the power of God.
- This symbol is found on the Sikh flag, which is called the Nishan Sahib.

The Happy Human

- **Humanism**

- Humanism is not a religion, but it is a way of thinking.
- This is called a “philosophy”.
- Humanists do not believe in a god.
- They believe that we should try to make our life and that of others as happy as possible.
- Humanists often use the symbol of the Happy Human.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

● Environmentalism

- Environmentalism is not a religion.
- A person can have a religious belief and also be an environmentalist.
- Environmentalists believe that our natural environment needs to be looked after.
- They believe that everyone can take action to look after the environment, from individuals to companies to governments.
- Many different symbols are used to represent caring for the environment. The recycle symbol is widely recognized.



And finally....

It is important to remember that people have different religious beliefs and there is no right or wrong way. Each religion is equally valid.

In addition, having a religious belief or being a humanist does not mean that a person cannot also be an environmentalist.