

Symbols of Christmas

(from Ruth Hietbrink, Chaplain)

Symbols of Christmas are found everywhere, have you ever thought about the meaning of these symbols?

Let's review the meaning of these symbols; and as we go through the images, decorate your home or meeting room, using the icons that we discuss in this program.

Star

Stars are symbols that are used everywhere. You may find one topping the Christmas Tree, hanging on a branch of the tree, or as a wall decoration. The star is one of the most familiar icons of the Christmas Holiday. Before Jesus was born, Samuel foretold the signs of the Savior's birth, which included the presence of a bright star. The bright star, also known as the Star of Bethlehem, led the Wise Men to the barn where Jesus was born.

Matthew 2:7-11

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸ Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹ When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Angel

Angels are an especially important part of Christianity. Angels are known to be messengers of God, watching over individuals, and providing direction through God's orders. Angels have delivered messages to God's servants, namely Gabriel, who played an prominent role as a messenger preceding the birth of Christ.

Luke 1:19

¹⁹The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

Poinsettia

The poinsettia originates in Mexico. This plant symbolized new life. The petals of the flower resemble the shape of a star, like the star that led the Wise Men to baby Jesus in Bethlehem. Also, the red color of the poinsettia can remind us of the blood that Christ shed for us.

Hebrew 9:14

¹⁴How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Christmas tree

I discovered that the first Christmas tree brought inside and decorated was during the 16th century by Martin Luther. He could see the stars through the evergreen trees, he ran home to tell his children that it reminded

him of Jesus. Martin Luther wrote a sermon about this experience for his church, this led to the people decorating the trees with candles as a symbol of letting Jesus into their homes. The symbol of a Christmas tree represents Jesus and the light he brings to the world. Also, the Christmas tree is forever green and alive.

Acts 3:23

²³Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a **Savior, Jesus**, as he promised.

Bells

Bells stand for the proclamation of the birth of Christ when the angels in heaven praised God. Now bells are rang during Christmas to declare the beginning of the holiday season and to announce the birth of Jesus. The ringing of bells has also been thought to drive out evil spirits throughout winter celebration.

Luke 2:9-14

⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; ¹¹for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!"

Candle

There are many separate reasons why candles are associated with Christmas, no one really knows when they first became connected to the event!

One of the earliest records of candles being used at Christmas is from the Middle Ages, where a large candle was used to represent the star of Bethlehem. Jesus has been known to be called 'the Light of the World' by Christians. This might have started the custom of the Advent wreath with Candles.

Candles were also the first decoration placed on Christmas trees.

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Prayer

Dear God, we offer this meek prayer as we grow near the Christmas season. We come before you to pray with a song of thanks in our hearts—a song of salvation, a song of courage and renewal. We pray for joy in our hearts, hope for the future, love to forgive, and peace upon the earth. We ask for redemption of all our family members and friends, and we pray your blessings on all people. May there be food for the hungry, love for all people, recovery for the ill, and safety for our country. Please be with our servicemembers and keep them in Your care. We ask this in your name. Amen

Five For Fighting/Jim Brickman - Christmas Where You Are [Official Lyric Video] -
YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UGmzBCQ80c>)

Christmas Where You Are – Jim Brickman

[Verse 1]

There are stockings
Full and waiting
From sea to shining sea
Jingle bells are ringing
In keys of... liberty
Children celebrating
Santa and his sleigh
Of reindeer who found their way again
Across the home, home of the brave
'Tis the 25th day of December
In a season best to remember
That blessings and bows and mistletoes
Are not without tolls...
Guardian souls
A soldier has a soldier's duty
That takes no holiday
So because you're far from home this winter
There's one thing I'd like to say...

[Chorus]

Thank you!
For the gift of freedom
That lights these Holy stars
Thank you!
For each & every Christmas tree
Across this sacred land of ours
May angels fly beside you
May heaven steel your heart
May God remind you in his grace
Though tonight I cannot touch your face
It doesn't matter if you're near or far
It's Christmas where you are

[Verse 2]

Your chair is empty at the table
Still I take your hand
As we pray for peace in this small world
On our knees we stand
Of this body of this nation
You are the heart and spine
So to each great generation
Of heroes down the line...

[Chorus]

Thank you!
For the gift of freedom
That lights these Holy stars
Thank you!
For each & every Christmas tree
Across this sacred land of ours
May angels fly beside you
May heaven steel your heart
May God remind you in his grace
Though tonight I cannot touch your face
It doesn't matter if you're near or far
It's Christmas where you are

[Bridge]

Every day is Memorial Day
Every day the 4th of July
Let all religions celebrate
The freedom that you provide
For if we stand together
We will never fall
Merry Christmas to the one I love!
Merry Christmas to one and all!

[Chorus]

Thank you!
For the gift of freedom
That lights these Holy stars
Thank you!
For each & every Christmas tree
Across this sacred land of ours
May angels fly beside you
May heaven steel your heart
May God remind you in his grace
Though tonight I cannot touch your face
When hopes seems a hundred miles away
Just close your eyes, and you will see his sleigh
It doesn't matter if you're near or far
It's Christmas where you are