

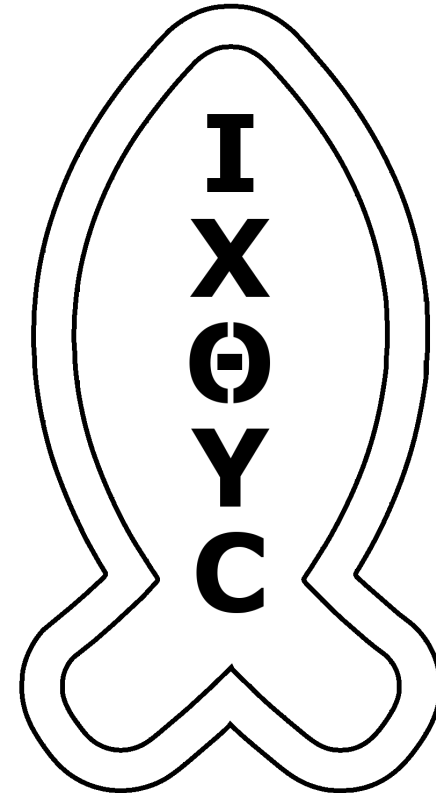
Fish Faith

Family Devotion

1. To start your family devotion, take a few minutes to let everyone share a high point and a low point from the day.
2. Open a Bible to Matthew 16:13-20. Have one person read, or take turns reading the passage out loud together.
3. Talk about the passage together:
 - What was the first question Jesus asked his disciples?
 - What was different about the second question Jesus asked them?
 - Read Peter's response again - what does this response show about his faith in Jesus?
 - Jesus tells Peter that on the rock of this faithful confession he will build his church. Why is it important for the church, and for our families, to be reminded of who Jesus is?
4. Pray together as a family. Thank God for sending Jesus to be your Savior, and praise him for all of the high points your family experienced this week. Pray also for the low points your family shared, and ask God to strengthen your family through those difficult times.
5. Close your devotion by blessing one another - make sure everyone has a chance to both give and receive a blessing!

May God bless you
And remind you
That Jesus is the Christ,
God's Son, Your Savior.
Amen.

Advent Family Devotions



Let's Learn About CHRIST MONograms,
CHRISMONS

ICHTHUS FISH

Why a fish?

The fish became an important symbol for Christians hundreds of years ago, only a few decades after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. It began showing up in Christian art as early as the 2nd century AD, and it's still used today as a powerful symbol of faith in Christ.

Fish are mentioned several times in the Bible, which may be what helped them become an important Christian symbol. For example:

- Many of Jesus' disciples were fishermen.
- At the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus performed a miracle by feeding a huge crowd with only 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.
- After Jesus' resurrection, he meets the disciples as they are fishing and tells them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. Though they had previously caught nothing, when they follow Jesus' instructions they catch 153 fish!
- In Matthew 12:38-45 Jesus talks about "the sign of Jonah," referring to Jonah spending 3 days in a fish. This is a foreshadowing of Jesus' death and resurrection.

These are just a few of the many reasons why the fish may have become a popular symbol for early Christians. One story says that in the first centuries after Christ's resurrection, when the Roman Empire was persecuting Christians, they would use the symbol when they met strangers while traveling. The Christian would draw an arc - one half of the fish. If the stranger was also Christian, they would recognize the fish and draw the other arc, letting the Christian know they were in safe company.

Along with the picture of the fish, the Greek word for fish - ΙΧΘΥC - (pronounced ICK-THUS) is often paired with the picture of the fish. ΙΧΘΥC is an acronym and an acrostic, meaning each letter of the word is the first letter of another phrase. Check it out -

I

The letter iota (pronounced YO-ta) makes an "I" or "Y" sound. It is also the first letter of "Jesus" in Greek.
 Ἰησοῦς - pronounced "yay-seuss" - is Jesus's name.

X

The letter Chi (pronounced key) makes a sound like the letter "k". It is the first letter of "Christ" in Greek.
 Χριστός - pronounced "Kris-toss" - means "Christ" or "Anointed One."

Θ

The letter Theta (pronounced THAY-tuh - make sure you hear the h!) makes a sound like the letters "th." It is the first letter of the Greek word for "God."
 Θεοῦ - pronounced "teh-OO" - means "God," but it is the possessive form of the word. It would be translated "of God" or "God's."

Υ

The letter Upsilon (pronounced OOPS-eh-lawn) makes a sound like the letter "u" It is the first letter of the Greek word for "Son."
 Υἱός - pronounced "HWE-aus" - means "son."

(Did you notice the ' before the Y? That's called a rough breathing mark, which adds the "h" sound to the beginning of the word.

C

The letter Sigma (pronounced SIG-muh) makes an "s" sound. It is the first letter of "Savior" in Greek.
 Σωτηρ - pronounced "sew-TAIR" - means "savior."

(C and Σ are both forms of the letter sigma. C is the simplified version and became popular long before Jesus was born because it was easier to write and carve into stone!

When you put it all together....

Jesus

Christ,

God's

Son,

Savior

I

X

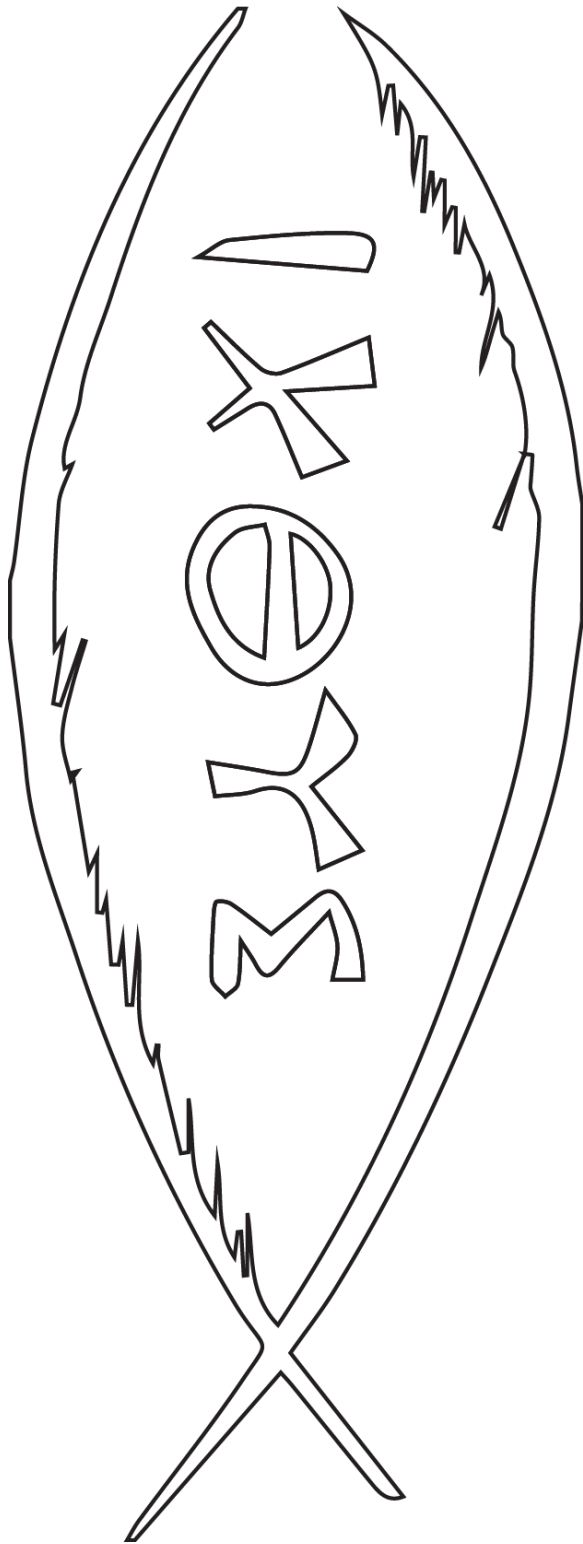
Θ

Υ

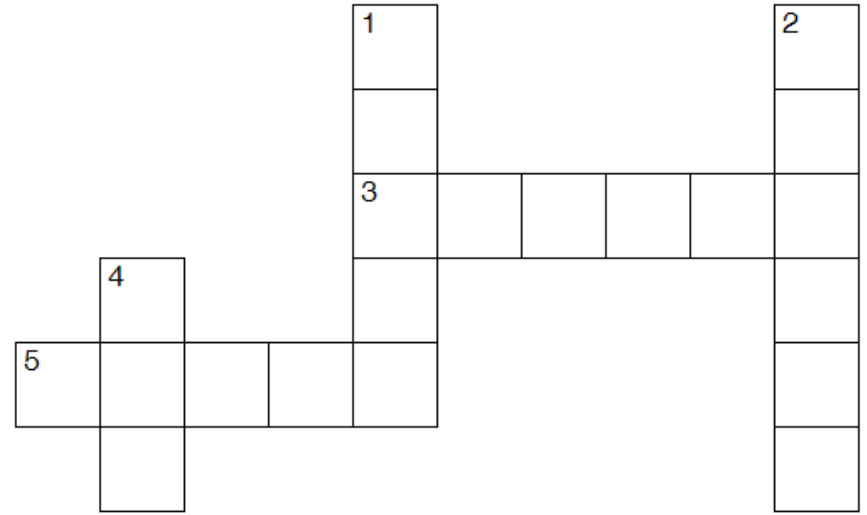
C

SON, SAVIOR

JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S



I X Θ Y C Puzzle



ACROSS

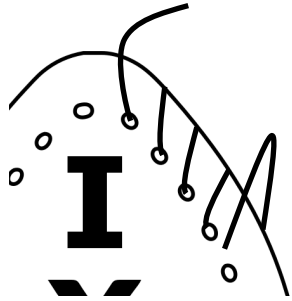
- 3 Who Jesus is to us, and part of our church's name.
- 5 _____ the Father, with an " 's "

DOWN

- 1 The name Mary and Joseph gave to their baby.
- 2 The English equivalent of the Greek word for "Messiah" or "Anointed One."
- 4 Jesus was this to Mary and God.

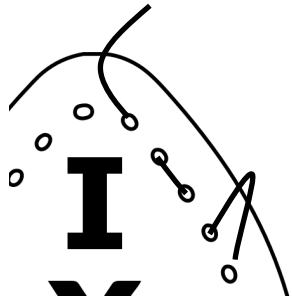
ways to weave your Chrismon

Finishing Touches



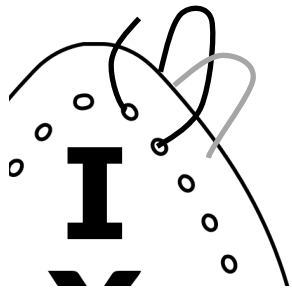
The Overcast Stitch

Push your thread DOWN through every stitch, bringing it up and over the edge each time.



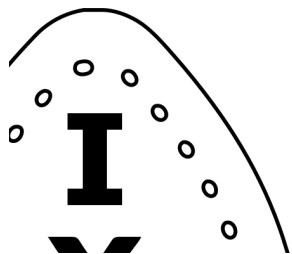
The Running Stitch

Push your thread DOWN through the first stitch and then UP through the next stitch. Keep repeating this DOWN, UP pattern.



The Blanket Stitch

Push your thread DOWN through every stitch, but before you pull it tight, pass the thread through the loop your stitch made.



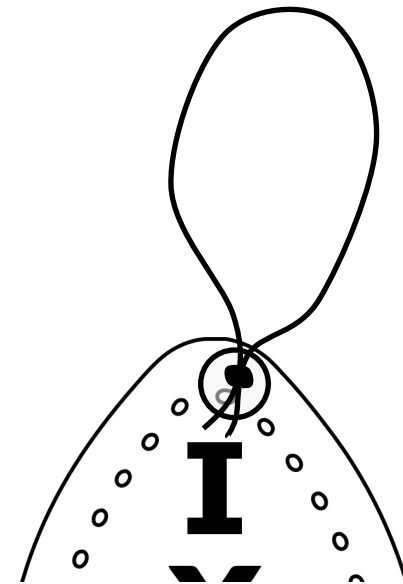
Unwoven

Or, leave the Chrismon unwoven for a nice, lacey look.

Once you've finished the white front of the Chrismon, use the glue dots to attach it to the gold back.

Place 3-4 glue dots onto the back of the white Chrismon, being careful to avoid covering the cutouts.

Place one glue dot near the top and lay the loop of string on it to make a hanger for your Chrismon.



Once the hanger is in place, flip the white part over and carefully lay it onto the gold back. Press down firmly to make sure the glue dots stick the two pieces together.

That's it - your Chrismon is finished!