



Introduction

Finding ways to connect with the worldwide family of the Christian Faith has been a growing area of interest both in churches and schools. Such windows into the multi-cultural and international practice of Christianity in today's world are a vital resource to give us a true picture of what it means to be a global Christian in the 21st century. For Christians, this is of course also important evidence of the continuing truth and power of the story of Jesus to influence lives and transform societies.

In [A-cross the World](#), published by Barnabas in 2005, this connection to the big picture was through the symbol of the cross. Differing Christian traditions and various Christian faith communities around the world are united by this one key and central sign of a shared faith. This universal cross has at the same time been interpreted, designed and adapted to express a unique, local expression of that same faith. With each cross comes a particular story of how each community experiences God's love and puts it into action.

Preparation

Each of the crosses in this new series supplements the 40 crosses that can already be found in the book [A-cross the World](#). With each there is a Bible link with wondering questions, background information about the cross, stories to share and craft ideas to make a version of the cross - providing enough material for a session with children in a church group, in the classroom or at an all-age event. There is also a picture provided for each cross that could be printed or used in a PowerPoint presentation in order to provide a talking point for groups or as a focus for collective worship.

This cross belongs to a series of new crosses and, as with the first collection, the overall aim remains the same, namely:

- to enable children and adults to see the cross through the eyes of other cultures and traditions;
- to prompt discussion and debate on why this single, historical event continues to exercise such an influence worldwide;
- to explore how Christians in a wide variety of places, different times in history and in different circumstances, have lived purposeful lives because of their faith in a Christ, who died and who is risen - symbolised by the cross.

Development

To view an associated picture for this cross, go to [A Resurrection Cross 1 - picture](#).

Bible link

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside the tomb. She was still weeping, when she stooped down and saw two angels inside. They were dressed in white and were sitting where Jesus' body had been. One was at the head and the other was at the foot. The angels asked Mary, 'Why are you crying?' She answered, 'They have taken away my Lord's body! I don't know where they have put him.'

As soon as Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know who he was. Jesus asked her, 'Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?' She thought he was the gardener and said, 'Sir, if you have taken his body away, please tell me, so I can go and get him.' Then Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him, 'Rabboni.' The Aramaic word 'Rabboni' means 'Teacher'.

John 20:11-16 (CEV)

Only Mary Magdalene stayed in the garden after her discovery of the empty tomb on the first Easter morning. She was distraught and couldn't really take in the angels' message. But then she meets Jesus himself, risen from the dead. New life for the world appeared in person in this Easter garden.

Wondering about this Bible story

- I wonder if Mary thought that the vision of angels was just her mind playing tricks on her. After all, she was still in shock and it was early in the morning.
- I wonder why she thought that the gardener might have taken away the body.
- I wonder why Jesus chose to appear to Mary before all the others.

The story of this cross

Traditionally, the whole church is stripped bare for the services on Good Friday, when Christians remember the death of Jesus on the cross. All that is left at the end of a service is a cross, sometimes draped with a purple cloth.

To mark the tremendous change that happens on Easter morning, many churches decorate the whole church with an abundance of fresh flowers and greenery as a sign of the new life that the resurrection brings. This is extended to the cross; so it too is covered with colourful blooms.

Lilies are the traditional resurrection flower for this decoration. The dramatic difference between their closed buds and the full glory of the opened flower expresses the wonderful transformation that Easter morning brings - you can even find lily crosses in some Christian art and in stained glass windows. However, other flowers have taken on particular biblical significance too:

- **Anemone:** Used in the early church as a symbol of the Trinity and used in art as a symbol of sorrow and death. It is often seen in scenes of the crucifixion.
- **Columbine:** Thought by some to look like a dove, the columbine is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The name comes from the Latin *columba*, which means 'dove'. Seven blooms on a stalk represent the seven gifts of the Spirit.
- **Cyclamen:** Cyclamen is used in reference to the Virgin Mary. The red spot at its centre

represents the sorrow she carried in her heart.

- **Daisy:** The daisy is a late symbol of the innocence of the Christ Child.
- **Dandelion:** The dandelion, one of the 'bitter herbs', is a symbol of Christ's Passion.
- **Pansy:** This symbolises remembrance and meditation.
- **Passion Flower:** Its various parts are seen as symbols of Jesus' scourging, crowning with thorns and crucifixion.
- **Rose:** A white rose symbolises purity. A red rose is a symbol of martyrdom. A wreath of roses is symbolic of heavenly joy.

Another way to create a resurrection cross is either to paint a picture of the risen Christ on it, such as this one from San Salvador (see [A Resurrection Cross 2 - picture](#)) or to sculpt Jesus in triumph rising from the surface of the cross (see [A Resurrection Cross 3 - picture](#)).

Crafting the cross

This is an activity for a group to work on together.

You will need a fairly substantial wooden cross structure, to which you can attach various flowers to represent the story of the first Easter. Invite the group to bring in flowers, perhaps ones that have specific Christian associations (see above) or flowers with other connections to the story that they can suggest. To see what all this might end up like, see [A Resurrection Cross 1 - picture](#).

Cross Reflection

*We adore thee, O Christ,
And we bless thee
Because by thy Holy Cross
Thou hast redeemed the world.*

Antiphon for Good Friday from the Western Rite.