



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 Word Cross- picture](#)

Bible link

*In the beginning was the one who is called the Word.
The Word was with God and was truly God.
From the very beginning the Word was with God.*

*The Word became a human being and lived here with us.
We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father.
From him all the kindness and all the truth of God have come down to us.*

John 1:1-2 and 14 (CEV)

This is taken from the majestic opening verses of John's Gospel. Jesus is called the Word of God – God's way of talking with human beings directly. The term used suggests even more than this; maybe it even has the meaning of 'conversation'. God, through Jesus, invites his creation into a conversational friendship with God!

Wondering about this Bible story

- I wonder why John chose this term to describe Jesus.
- I wonder why this prologue to a Gospel might have been startling to many readers at the time.
- I wonder why many Christians today would say that this passage is one of their favourite parts in the New Testament.

The story of this cross

Rudolf Koch, who lived from 1876 to 1934, was a leading German calligrapher, typographic artist and teacher. He was born in Nuremberg and is primarily famous for designing several new typefaces.

Koch produced a book comprised of 493 old-world symbols, monograms and runes, entitled *The Book of Signs*. Some of his work can be seen today at the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach.

He also developed a whole series of specifically Christian symbols with new fonts that he had developed, using striking and original artistic designs. There is a selection of these available [on this website](#).

The particular word cross of his design illustrated above uses four three-letter Latin words, each of which describes Jesus. All four words meet at the X, which is of course another cross shape:

- DUX - Leader
- PAX - Peace
- LUX - Light
- REX - King

He designed a number of other crosses too.

Crafting the cross

It is not surprising that the cross shape has been picked out in various ways by words on Christian posters, artwork or publications. For example, the Common Worship Prayer Book for the Church of England has its title's words designed in the form of a cross. Can you find any other similar examples of special cross designs with words used to illustrate Christian publications or events?

Several key ideas about what Christians believe about Jesus, for example, can be expressed as two words that can be linked up as a cross, bisecting each other on a common letter.

Try it with:

- Jesus and Rescues
- God and Loves
- Saviour and Mighty
- Strong and Carer
- Master and Jesus
- Emmanuel and Human

(Clue: use the shorter word as the cross-piece)

Can you make crosses similar to Rudolf Koch's Latin cross from the English words:

1. Healer; Leader; Lover; Ruler
2. Word; Lord; Sword; Bread

[Here is a cross made from the one word *Jesus*.](#)

Sometimes Christians use the shape of the cross as a space on to which they can put important words or verses from the Bible. Here is a cross inscribed with some of the many names for Jesus:

[Names of Christ Cross - picture.](#)

And finally here is a word cross using 50 words to sum up the whole Bible:

[A Bible Story Cross - picture.](#)

Can you design your own cross-shape logo for your school or church, using key words that describe the sort of community you aim to be?

You could even try this with your own name or the name of the group to which you belong.

Cross reflection

O Lord , you have freed us from the fear of death. You have made the end of our life here into the beginning of true life... You have opened for us the way to resurrection, and given to those that fear you the sign of the holy cross as their emblem, to destroy the enemy and to save our life...'



Ending this prayer, she made the sign of the cross on her eyes, mouth and heart.

Part of a prayer of St Macrina as she was dying, written by her brother St Gregory of Nyssa (AD c330-c395).