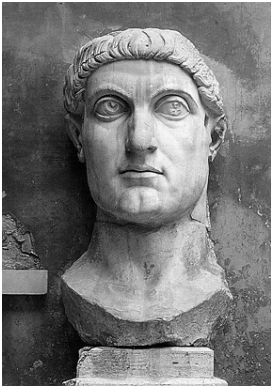


Shields of Faith

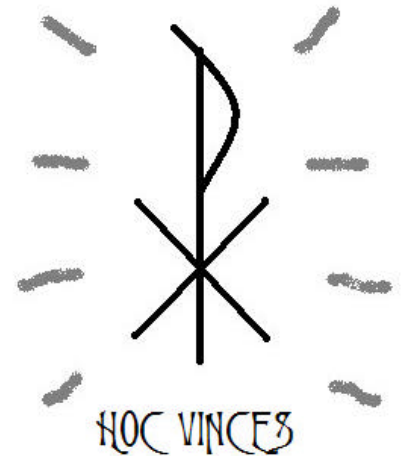
Family Activity

The Chi-Rho symbol is an ancient symbol that the early Christians used in their art, on burial grounds and in their places of worship to mark out a particular place or person as belonging to the Christian faith. The symbol is made by the overlapping of the first two letters of the Greek spelling of Christ (in Greek, *Christos*: chi-rho-iota-sigma-tau-omicron-sigma).



Roman Emperor
Constantine I

Tradition tells us of an amazing story about the Roman Emperor Constantine in the year 312 AD. He and his troops were about to enter a great military battle against his rival Maxentius, at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge near Rome. Constantine's army was greatly outnumbered, but this was an important battle that he could not back away from. The day before the battle, he saw a mysterious vision in the sky: the Chi-Rho symbol shined brightly with the words "In this sign wilt thou conquer" inscribed in Latin beneath it. The next morning he had each of his soldiers' shields marked with the symbol, and the army went on to defeat Maxentius, even though it looked like they had no chance! Constantine attributed this miraculous victory to the Christian God, and went on to become the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity. He also issued the Edict of Milan in the year 313, making Christianity an officially recognized religion in the Roman Empire for the first time in its existence.



Sources:

[The Compact History of the Catholic Church](#) by Dr. Alan Schreck

www.google.com Image Search

www.newadvent.org

www.covenantpcusa.org/youth/symbol.html

ACTIVITY

By marking his soldiers' shields with the Chi-Rho symbol, Constantine placed his men under the protection of Christ, by whose power they were led to victory against their enemy. This is the same thing that happened to us when we were baptized; we were sealed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and given the grace to fight the evil one on our journey of faith. For this activity, each member of your family is to cut out a shield and make one for themselves, writing their full baptismal name across the top edge, and the date of their baptism along the bottom. Fill the extra space with colors and symbols that remind you of your baptism and your Christian faith. Hang your shield on your bedroom door at home, and remember to celebrate each other's baptismal days as you would your birthday. If we celebrate the day we entered the world years ago, why not celebrate the day we were claimed as a member of God's army, as a child of the King of heaven and earth?!

Attachment sheet: Shields for each member of the family, plus extras