

## Birds in the Bible and used as Christian symbols

Birds have long been used to symbolize specific qualities of the Christian soul, good and bad as well as representing Christ, Mary and the saints. I mention just a few.

- The **dove** is well known as the symbol of the Holy Ghost, and also as representing peace and purity. It is also used in connection with St. Benedict, St. Scholastica, and St. Gregory the Great.
- The **sparrow**, often considered the commonest of birds, represents the least among people.
- The **goldfinch** is often seen in pictures of the Christ Child and because of this small bird's fondness for thistles and thorns, it has come to represent the Passion.
- The **stork** is a symbol of caution, watchfulness, devotion, and chastity. It is also associated with the Incarnation; as the stork announces the coming of spring, the Annunciation tells of the coming of the Messiah.
- Saint Peter is often portrayed with a **cock**; but, especially in Maronite church art, the rooster is the symbol of the soul's awakening and response to God's grace.
- The **pelican** symbolizes the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as well as the Eucharist (because it represents Christ's blood and provides spiritual nourishment). Do you know where we have a pelican in St Paul's?
- The **blackbird** often symbolizes the darkness of sin (its black feathers) and the temptations of the flesh (its beautiful song).
- The **raven**, because of his dark plumage and harsh cry, is used sometimes to signify the devil; but God seems to have a fondness for them. The Bible tells us ravens fed Elijah while he was in the desert. Because of this, the raven also represents solitude.

There are nearly 300 verses in the Bible that mention birds; mostly in the Old Testament and used often to teach spiritual lessons. More than one hundred of these merely use the word "fowl" or "bird," leaving the reader to guess at the species.

If you would like to know more about the birds in the Bible here are some references which you might like to explore. Read the passage and find the quote

**Psalms 124** "We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowls; the snare is broken, and we have escaped".

**Leviticus 11** has the longest list of birds in any one chapter of the Bible (and a similar one is can be found in **Deuteronomy 14**).

**Matthew 10** "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves".

**Luke 2** to offer a sacrifice . . . , 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons'"

There are lots more to find, especially in the Psalms if you want to go on exploring.

## Crafty Birds

You can use all one coloured paper or a mixture.

For each bird you will need

- Body: 5 (1-inch-wide) strips, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 inches long
- Head: 2 (1-inch-wide) strips, 2 ½ and 3 ½ inches long
- Tail: 5 (1 ½-inch-wide) strips, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 inches long
- Beak: 1 (1- by 2-inch) strip
- Eyes: 1 (1- by 1 ½-inch) strip



### Instructions for assembly

1. Roll the body strips into circles, overlap their ends about ¼ inch, and secure with glue. Nest the circles and glue them together. Tip: Use a peg to hold the pieces until it dries.
2. Do the same with the head strips, then glue the head to the body.
3. Trim the tail strips into long triangles then curl them a bit before gluing them together. Glue the tail to the body.
4. Fold the beak rectangle in half, then cut off the two folded corners at an angle. Fold in the tabs and glue them to the bird's head. Roll the paper for the eyes tightly and glue between the 2 circles of the head

### Feed the birds

Maybe you would prefer to make a bird feeder. You will need: cardboard from a toilet roll, peanut butter, plastic knife, string, cereal/bird seed

1. Spread lard or peanut butter on your cardboard tubes.
2. Roll the tube in cereal first and then in bird seed. (or you could use only cereal.)
3. Thread some string through your roll and tie the ends together and hang on a tree.
4. Watch the birds eating from the bird feeder and remember how much God cares.



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#### Another quick idea:

Make a paper aeroplane

Draw on it and colour it in to make it look like a bird

Fly your bird and as you do so think about how as we travel through life; God cares about us and never stops loving us

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# Name the bird

