

**This Answer Bank will be updated regularly. If you have ideas for additions, please email: Your Children's Trails Adviser or enquires@theartsociety.org
Please note that answer text here is in Tahoma 11 font for ease of use in the Answer template**

HOW TO USE THIS ANSWERBANK

- 1 Many answers and illustrations for churches can be found in *Inside Churches; A Guide to Church Furnishings* . These may be copied and used.
The book can be ordered from NADFAS ENTERPRISES LTD, ISBN 0-9540191-0-5.
Telephone 08430 600025 or e-mail nadfas@sparkledirect.co.uk
- 2 Some other sources which have been used are:
Recording a Church. An Illustrated Glossary by Thomas Cocke and others. Published by Council for British Archaeology.
The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, edited by Cross, published by OUP 1971
The Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture by Peter and Linda Murray, published by OUP 1996
Christian Symbols Ancient and Modern by Heather Child and Dorothy Colles, published by Bell and Hyman, London 1971
Hall's Dictionary etc of Subjects & Symbols in Art, published by Murray 1974
Pevsner's Architectural Glossary published by Yale UP 2010.
An Heraldic Alphabet by J P Brooke-Little published by Robson Books 1985.
- 3 All answers have been checked by scholars.
- 4 Please copy and paste these answers, or the relevant parts, into your answer sheet whenever you need them. This ensures that the answers have some consistency throughout the country. Sometimes some history or more explanation has been added to the notes. Use this if you feel it is appropriate – and if you have room.
- 5 Try to use these answer notes (especially with something complicated like the ORGAN) to make up a simple question.
- 6 We particularly ask you to use all or part of the given answer to IHS/ihc, chi rho, and FISH so that the Greek symbols are not accidentally changed. The font which we use for any Greek is SYMBOL (size 10).
- 7 Otherwise the font used universally for Children's Trails is TAHOMA (size 10 or 11)
- 8 There are certain answers which perhaps need to be added to the question sheet as they are useful for children to know:

e.g. On the question sheet you could put

IHS/ihc This is a short way of writing Jesus.

PISCINA This was used for "Holy washing up"!

INRI means Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

but give a fuller answer in your Answer sheet

ACHIEVEMENT OF ARMS (or simply **ACHIEVEMENT**) see also **ARMS, COATS OF ARMS, CREST, ROYAL ARMS**

This refers to the complete armorial bearings - the arms (shield), crest, supporters, motto etc.

AISLE

A wing on the North and/or South side of the nave, divided from it by pillars. Aisle is also used to refer to the central space between the seating in the nave.

AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God. Used to describe a lamb with a St George's flag' symbol of the risen Christ. Lambs are symbols of sacrifice and Jesus is described as the Lamb of God.

ALTAR

A table, the focal point of a church, where the main Christian act of the Eucharist (Holy Communion or Mass) is performed.

It is also called "The Lord's Table", "The Holy Table" or "The Communion Table".

[Before the Reformation (mid 16th c.) the altar was of made of stone, sometimes with a space to contain relics (holy remains of saints).

After the Reformation the stone Altar was replaced with a wooden table, covered with a "Fair Linen Cloth" as instructed in the Book of Common Prayer. In the 19th and 20th c. stone altar tables have sometimes been reintroduced.]

A.M.D.G.

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam – To the greater glory of God. Often found at the start of inscriptions on gifts donated to the church.

ANGELS see also **ARCHANGELS**

Angels (from the Greek for "messenger") are mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible as spiritual beings. There are nine groups: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. Angels and Archangels are often shown in art wearing halos (nimbus) and with wings.

ARCADE

The term for a line of piers (columns/pillars) and arches.

ARCH An arch is a structure which spans a space while supporting weight.

ARCHANGELS

These are the chief angels. In the Christian tradition Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are normally reckoned as Archangels with Uriel sometimes added as the fourth.

ARMS see also **ACHIEVEMENT OF ARMS, COATS OF ARMS, CREST, ROYAL ARMS**

This term is often freely used when referring to the complete achievement, but really should be applied only to the actual shield and what is borne upon it.

AUMBRY

Small cupboard, often with a lamp above, for keeping the reserved sacrament/ bread and wine that has been consecrated and maybe taken to those who are too ill or too old to come to Church.

A Ω

Alpha and Omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.' Revelation 1.11.

BELFRY

Used both of the stage of the tower in which the bells are hung (also called **bell chamber**) or of the whole tower, particularly if the tower is free standing.

BENCHES

see Pews

BENCH ENDS

The Ends of the benches for the congregation. These are often decorated, sometimes with figures or elaborate carving. When these end in a high knob with leaves below, they are called **poppyheads**.

CHANCEL

Originally the area reserved for the clergy at the east end of the church and often divided off by a screen or steps. At one time the clergy were responsible for maintaining the chancel and the people for maintaining the rest of the church. Now the chancel usually contains benches or stalls for the choir and desks for the clergy.

CHANCEL ARCH

In a church, an arch dividing the CHANCEL from the NAVE or the CROSSING.

CHANTRY CHAPEL

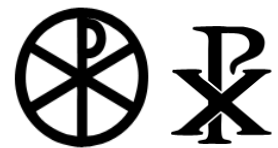
A small chapel, sometimes enclosed by a screen and holding an elaborate tomb. Before the practice was banned at the Reformation, wealthy patrons might leave money for priests to pray for the repose of their souls.

CHARITY – SEE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

CHI RHO

A monogram formed by the Greek letters **chi** and **rho**: Χ and Ρ which are the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ)

(The symbol was used by the Emperor Constantine as his emblem on his army's banners, hence its other name of LABARUM).



Two forms of the Chi Rho

Other books on Signs and Symbols say that it is an abbreviation of the Greek word 'Chreston' meaning a good thing or a good omen.

CLERK

The Parish Clerk was someone who could read, in the days when most people could not; he would say the responses in services on behalf of the congregation.

COAT OF ARMS (see also ACHIEVEMENT OF ARMS, ARMS, CREST, ROYAL ARMS)

Originally this meant just the arms which were borne on the coat armour worn over the armour itself. Today it is commonly used to refer to the full achievement of arms.

COCK

A reminder of the story that a cock crowed when St Peter three times denied that he knew Jesus, who had been arrested. (Matthew 26.34)

COLUMN

(Compare with Pillar and Pier). Upright, structural, especially in the classical styles, of round section with a capital, a shaft and usually a base.

CONSECRATION CROSSES

A cross, usually red, in a circle carved or painted on the inside of a church. Sometimes they are carved on the outside of the church. Originally 12 such crosses were painted when the church was first consecrated. Any that remain will probably be original and hundreds of years old.

CORBEL

Stone serving as a bracket often supporting roof timbers. Sometimes carved as a head or a shield.

CREST

An hereditary device, modelled onto the top of the helm and part of an achievement of arms. Sometimes, quite incorrectly, it is used in place of an Achievement of Arms or Coat of Arms.

CROSS

The cross is the main Christian sign or symbol. There are many different types of crosses.

CROSSING

The space where the chancel, nave and transepts meet. (In a small church, the space where the line between the N and S doors crosses the central aisle can sometimes be called the crossing.

CRUCIFIX

A crucifix is a cross with the figure of the crucified Lord hanging upon it, as distinct from a bare cross. (The representation of the body of Jesus on a crucifix is called the "corpus".)

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI

It is fine and fitting to die for one's country.

A quotation from the Roman poet Horace much used on War Memorials, sometimes simplified to Pro Patria - For their country.

FAITH –see THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

FISH

Secret sign used by early Christians because the letters of the Greek word Ιχθυσ (ichthus = fish) stands for Jesus Christ God's Son (our) Saviour.

I	Ιησους	Iesus
χ	χριστος	Christos
θ	θεου	God's (theou)
υ	υιος	Son (huios)
ς	σωτηρ	Saviour (soter)

FLAMES, FLAMING TONGUES

Symbol of the Holy Spirit, recalling the first Pentecost, Acts 2, 1-4.

FLEUR-DE-LIS or FLEUR-DE-LYS

Stylised version of the lily, the flower of the Virgin Mary. Also the sign of the Archangel Gabriel.

FONT

A large bowl, usually stone with a lead lining, at which people are baptised with water as a sign that they have become a Christian and a member of the worldwide church.

FOUR EVANGELISTS

The writers of the four gospels of the New Testament in the Bible. They each have a symbol: St Matthew - a man, St Mark – a lion, St Luke – an ox and St John – an eagle. The first three often have wings added.

GREEN MAN

A carved face with foliage coming from its mouth (and sometimes ears, eyes and/or nostrils). This is an ancient decoration. No-one really knows what it means. Explanations range from specifically Christian to specifically pagan. Like many grotesque carvings it is always enjoyable!

HALO or NIMBUS

A roundel painted or carved behind the head of Christ and Saints to denote their special status. In windows the halo of Christ often has a red cross on it.

HASSOCKS

Hassocks kneelers etc.....not to be confused with Cassocks which are garments sometimes worn by clergy and choir members or Haddock which is a fish!

HATCHMENT

A black diamond-shaped board painted with a coat of arms. These boards were hung outside the house when someone died and brought to church at the funeral. If the coat of arms is inside another diamond and has ribbons at the top rather than a crest, the person commemorated was a woman.

HOLY BIBLE

The inspired writing of all Christian Churches, divided into The Old Testament, largely inherited from the Jewish scriptures, and the New Testament, written since the death of Christ.

HOPE – see THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

HOST

A round wafer of unleavened bread used at a celebration of the Eucharist, Communion or Mass. Often shown in carvings, windows or paintings as a semicircle above the communion cup.

ICON

Literally *likeness*. A picture of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, or a saint, usually painted on wood. Used as an aid to prayer and much venerated in the Orthodox Church. Icons are now often found in Anglican churches.

IC XC NIKA

One of the oldest forms of the sacred name. It stands for "Jesus Christ conquers".
IC Jesus
XC Christ
NIKA He conquers. (NIKH means Victory)

IN CAELO QUIES

Peace in heaven. Often found as a motto under the coat of arms on hatchments.

IHS/ihc

IHS is an abbreviation of the Greek word IESOVS (**ΙΗΣΟΥΣ**) meaning JESUS. In Greek capitals it is **ΙΗΣ**. In Greek lower case it is **ιης**. Over many years the letters have been changed to our alphabet. **ΙΗΣ** is rendered as **IHS** and **ιης** is rendered as **ihc**.



It is known as THE SACRED MONOGRAM and the letters are often superimposed.



The letters in the Roman alphabet were thought to stand for Iesus Hominum Salvator – Jesus Saviour of mankind.

Over the centuries other meanings have been given to it, such as the Latin: 'In Hoc Signo' short for 'In Hoc Signo vinces' - in this sign (you will conquer) said to have been the motto of Constantine the Great.

I.N.R.I.

The initial letters of Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. (John 19.19)

INSTRUMENTS OF THE PASSION

Crown of thorns, scourge, nails, hammer & pincers, cock, dice, robe, ladder, sponge on stick. Associated with the Crucifixion. Often appear on shields held by angels.

LADY CHAPEL

A smaller sanctuary, often at the East end of a side aisle, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who was popularly addressed as Our Lady. In some cathedrals or larger churches, the chapel, East of the High Altar, is often the Lady Chapel.

LECTERN

A bookstand in wood or brass to hold the large Holy Bible or The Lectionary from which the lessons are read.

Sometimes it is shaped like an eagle with outspread wings, because eagles are thought to be the birds that can fly the highest and so nearest to the heavens.

The eagle is often standing on a sphere which represents the world.

LECTIONARY

A book containing the extracts from Scripture appointed to be read at Public Worship. Particular portions are appointed to a particular day. The Lectionary is often to be found on the Lectern.

MANDORLA

An almond shaped frame which encloses the whole body of Christ or the Virgin Mary. It denotes their glory and holiness.

MEMENTO MORI

Remember You Must Die, or a Reminder of Death.

These words occur on Memorials in the 15th and 16th centuries when there was an emphasis on being prepared for death and judgement. The words are also used to describe depictions of skulls, skeletons, scythes, hour-glasses. etc and warnings, often in Latin, e.g. 'Once I was as you are now, as I am now you soon will be.'

MISERICORD

A misericord (sometimes called a mercy seat) is a small wooden shelf on the underside of a folding seat in a church, installed to provide a degree of comfort for a person who has to stand during long periods of prayer. Misericords were designed to allow the users to lean against them to reduce their discomfort. They were often skillfully carved and most are found in the choir stalls of a church.

MONOGRAM

Initial letters, sometimes entwined, to signify a person's name or title e.g. BVM or IHS.

M.U.

Mothers' Union. A worldwide Christian Church of England group originally for ladies but now with men as members too. In many churches the local group's banner is kept and is carried ceremonially at any large MU gathering.

NAVE

The main body of the church with benches, pews or chairs for the congregation/people. In larger churches it may be divided from North and/or South aisles by pillars (piers).

ORGAN

Usually it is possible to see some **organ pipes**, either in a fairly plain 'pipe-rack' arrangement but sometimes in a handsome architectural **case**.

The pipes which you can see are never all the pipes of the organ – you might see 10 or 20 but there will always be 100s or even 1000s more hidden from view.

The **longest pipes** make the **lowest sounds**.

The organ is played from a **console**. Sometimes the console is **detached**, i.e. not attached to the organ itself but using a system of remote control.

Sometimes it is shut in behind doors but you may be able to see one or more rows of **keys** for the hands. There may be 54, 56 or sometimes as many as 61 keys.

Down below you can see a **pedal board** which is just like the keys for the hands but is played by the feet and controls **deeper** sounds.

On either side of the keys (or sometimes above) you can see **stop knobs** (sometimes there is a row of ivory labels, or **tabs**, above the keyboards which do the same job). These control rows of pipes which make the sound higher or lower or louder or softer.

Each such row of pipes, called **stops** as well, has at least one pipe for every note.

PASCHAL CANDLE (please note spelling of PASCHAL. It has an H!)

The Paschal candle is a large, white candle. A new Paschal candle is blessed and lit every year at Easter and is used throughout the Paschal Season (i.e. Easter until Trinity) when it is often placed near the altar. At other times of year, it is lit for special occasions such as baptisms and funerals and is often placed near the font.

PELICAN

The pelican was believed to pierce her breast to feed her young with her blood. Used as a symbol of the shedding of Christ's blood for mankind.

PEWS

Any fixed church seating is often referred to as the Pews. To be exact a pew has a door and is a reminder of the days when people rented private seating for their family. Open seating should really be referred to as **Benches**.

PIER

(Compare Column and Pillar) Large masonry or brick support, often for an arch.

PILLAR

(Compare Column and Pier) Freestanding, upright; in section it can be square, round (or any shape). It does NOT conform to the Classical Orders, i.e. it has no capital or base.

PISCINA

An arched niche near the altar with a basin and a drain going straight into the ground for rinsing the communion vessels.

POPPYHEAD

An ornamental finial used to decorate bench ends in a form somewhat resembling a fleur-de-lis. It is not known where the word has come from, possibly from the Latin "puppis" meaning the stern or poop of a ship or French "poupée" meaning a figurehead or puppet.

PULPIT

An elevated and enclosed platform from which a sermon (talk) is delivered during a service. It is raised so that the preacher can be seen and heard easily. Pulpits are made from any building material e.g. wood, stone or metal, and are sometimes highly decorated. (*From the Latin Pulpitum meaning platform or staging*).

PULPITUM

A pulpitum is a massive screen, a usual feature in cathedrals and monastic churches, most often constructed of stone but occasionally timber. It divides the Choir from the Nave. It can be lavishly carved (see examples at Canterbury Cathedral, York Minster, Exeter Cathedral, Christchurch Priory etc). A rood screen would have been West of the pulpitum but none survives with a pulpitum. (*From the Latin Pulpitum meaning platform or staging*).

QUATREFOIL

A four-lobed opening or decoration.

REBUS

Conveying names by things e.g. Oxford by showing a bullock and water. It was much used when many people could not read, particularly in coats of arms and badges.
rebus means 'by things' in Latin



REREDOS

Literally *rear back*. A fixed backing to an altar, usually made of wood or stone and decorated with carvings and Christian symbols, and generally fixed to the E. wall.

RESURGAM

"I will rise again". Often found as a motto under the coat of arms on hatchments.

ROOD SCREEN

The wooden screen dividing the congregation from the priests and choir in old churches. It is so called because originally it was topped by a Rood [Olde English 'Rod' = cross], a large carving of Christ on the cross with the figures of the Virgin Mary on one side and St John on the other. At the Reformation churches were ordered to remove the cross and figures.

ROYAL ARMS

Royal Arms are displayed in churches as a sign of loyalty to the Crown and obedience to the Sovereign as Supreme Head or Governor of the Church of England. Churchwardens were first required to arrange the display of the arms during the reign of Henry VIII following the Reformation. After the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, on the return of Charles II, the display of the Royal Arms was required by Statute. There is no longer any formal requirement to display the Royal Arms.

Royal Arms are generally square or rectangular. If they are lozenge (diamond) shaped, they will be a Royal Hatchment, displayed after the death of a Royal person.

SANCTUARY

The area between the altar rails and the East wall containing the altar, where the bread and wine of the mass, communion or Eucharist are consecrated or sanctified.

SANCTUARY LAMP

A lamp, usually with red glass, which hangs before the place where the consecrated bread and wine of communion are kept. These may be kept on the altar in a tabernacle and then the lamp hangs from the ceiling on long chains. See also Aumbry.

SANCTUS BELL

A small bell rung at the consecration, the most important moment of the communion service.

SAINTS, PROPHETS and ARCHANGELS and their ATTRIBUTES

No one knows what the Saints etc actually looked like. To help those people who could not read to recognise the saints shown in windows or statues, artists would show something that was associated with the story of the Saint. Here are some of the most usual of these attributes.

Anchor	St Clement, who was bound to an anchor and cast into the sea.
Arrows	St Sebastian, who was tortured with arrows.
Birds & animals	St Francis, who is said to have preached to the birds.
Chains	St Leonard, who worked to free prisoners.
Crown & arrows	St Edmund, king and martyr, killed by the Danes.
Dragon (a soldier)	St Michael the Archangel (with wings and a sword or spear) or St George
Dragon & cross	St Margaret of Antioch, who miraculously escaped a dragon.
Dragon in cup	St John, usually recognisably young with fair hair.
Dragon & spear	St Michael the Archangel who drove Lucifer from heaven.
Eagle	St John as the evangelist.
Fleur-de-lis	S Mary (Virgin Mary), also St Gabriel the Archangel.
Gold X on blue	St Alban, the first British martyr.
Gridiron	St Lawrence, who was put to death on one.
Organ or Harp	St Cecilia, patroness of music.
Harp	King David, St Cecilia
Keys	St Peter, who was promised the Keys of Heaven.
Lion	St Mark, his symbol as an evangelist.
Loaves	St Philip, for his part in feeding of the five thousand.
Organ	St Cecilia
Perfume jar	St Mary Magdalene, from the perfume she poured on Jesus' feet.
Red cross on white	St George, patron saint of England.
Saw	The prophet Isaiah, or St James the Less.
Scallop shell	see below
Ship	St Nicholas.
Spiked wheel	St Catherine of Alexandria, who was put to death on one.
Sword	St Paul, who told us to be armed with the Sword of the Spirit and was martyred by being beheaded (he was a Roman citizen).

Three gold balls	St Nicholas, from the gold he gave to three poor sisters as a dowry. He is the real Santa Claus!
Tower	St Barbara, who was imprisoned in a tower.
White X on blue	St Andrew, patron Saint of Scotland (also fishing nets).

SCALLOP SHELL

Worn in their hats by medieval pilgrims, hence a symbol of pilgrimage. The attribute of St James the Great who was the patron saint of pilgrims.

SCRATCH/MASS DIALS

A simple form of sundial with rays and a central hole, in which a stick (gnomon) could be put. The shadow falling on a ray showed the time of the service when there were no clocks. Found on the outside of South-facing doorways and buttresses. If found within a South porch, the porch is a later addition; if found on any other wall, the stone has been re-used.

SEASONAL COLOURS

The seasons of the Church's year are marked by using different colours for the priest's vestments, altar frontals and other hangings.

White for festivals, Christmas, Easter, and Saints who were not martyred.

Purple for Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas) and Lent (the 40 days before Easter)

Red for Pentecost, also called Whitsun (the coming of the Holy Spirit), Holy Week and martyrs.

Green for all other periods (known as Ordinary Time).

Local variations are very common until the 19th century and some are still maintained. For example, in the diocese of Salisbury, and possibly some others, 'Sarum Blue' maybe used instead of purple. In some dioceses churches use unbleached linen instead of purple during Lent.

SEDILIA

Low seats in the wall to the South of the altar for those assisting in the service.

SOUNDING BOARD

A wooden canopy over the pulpit which helped to magnify the sound of the preacher's voice in the days before microphones.

SQUINT or HAGIOSCOPE

This opening in the wall allowed the priest at a side Altar to see the priest at the high (main or parish) Altar and avoid elevating the Host (raising the holy bread), the central point of the Mass, before the Parish priest. Before the Reformation the congregation very rarely shared the bread and wine. The moment when the Host was raised was the high point of the Mass for them. At the elevation a small bell was rung.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A series of 14 pictures or carvings telling the story of Christ from his condemnation by Pilate to his Crucifixion used as an aid to prayer. Sometimes only the figures, 1 to 14, perhaps in Roman numerals, are shown, to help people imagine the scenes for themselves.

STOP, HEAD-STOP OR LABEL-STOP

Stone, often in the form of a head, found at the ends of the arch over a door or window.

STOUP

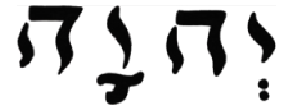
Small basin near the main door. In the past, and in modern day Roman Catholic or High Anglican churches, it held/holds holy water for people to dip a finger in before crossing themselves. Often smashed by Protestants during the Reformation or Civil War because it was considered papist.

TABERNACLE

A small cupboard, perhaps curtained, in the centre of the altar for keeping the consecrated bread and wine. See also Sanctuary lamp.

TETRAGRAMMATON

This is the technical term for the four letter Hebrew word 'JHVH' - known to us as Yahweh or Jehovah. This is translated in the Holy Bible as 'Lord' or 'God'.



THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

Faith, Hope and Charity (Love) are the 3 theological virtues named by St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13 verse 13. In art Faith is often shown as a figure holding a cross, Hope holds an Anchor and Charity or Love is often shown surrounded by children.

'THREE DECKER' PULPIT

It has a pulpit from which the priest can give his sermon, a reading desk (or lectern) just below and the clerk's desk at the lowest level. Sometimes there is a 'sounding board' on top. The Parish Clerk was someone who could read, in the days when most people could not; he would say the responses in services on behalf of the congregation.

TRACERY

The cut out patterns found in stone in windows and in wood in screens, etc. 'Blind' tracery shows the patterns without the stone/wood being pierced.

TRANSEPT

An extension built out to the North and/or South of larger churches and cathedrals, usually where the nave meets the chancel, to provide space for small chapels or extra seating. A church with North and South transepts will have the overall form of a cross.

TREFOIL

Clover leaf shape used in many decorations as a symbol of the Trinity.

TRINITY

A means that Christians use to explain their belief in one God in three persons, Father, Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. See 'Inside Churches' under SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY TRINITY which has illustrations.

VOTIVE CANDLE STAND

A metal frame to hold candles. People light candles so that their prayer may continue as long as the candle burns, or as a form of blessing for a loved one.