

A fun trail to lead to an event or service to explore the ichthus fish symbol, prayer and Jesus.

You will need: 10 large ichthus fish made from air drying clay, knitted or as a bright painting for example. Be creative with colours, texture and design. Give each fish a name tag e.g. Shark, Nemo, Dory, Trout, Jaws, Moby Dick.

- Place each fish in the window of different buildings of your community.
- Families and children's groups, schools and uniformed organisations can hunt for the fish and write their names on a trail sheet. The sheet could include church information (website, Facebook page), event information, names of shops/venues taking part in the trail.
- Invite families and children's groups to bring completed sheets to an ichthus event or church service. This could be activity-based (suggestions below). It can be centred around the great catch of fish in John 21:1–14 and could encourage participants to use each fish as a reminder to pray, for friends and family to come to know Jesus.

Ichthus activities - suggestions:

- **Beads and chenille sticks:**
Thread pony beads on to a chenille stick and bend and twist the tail to make an ichthus fish shape.
- **Cardboard tube ichthus fish:**
Flatten kitchen roll cardboard tubes and cut into strips/rings. Cut apart at one fold and cut a slit half way through, from the bottom of the edge, 3cm from the cut end. Repeat a slit from the top edge, 3cm from the cut end, so that you can slot together to form the shape of the Ichthus fish. Write prayers on the inside of the fish. Decorate with paint or glitter and glue. Talk about how Christians used to be persecuted and had to hide their faith.
- **Glow stick fish:**
Create ichthus fish shapes with glow sticks. Talk about how two arc shapes make the symbol and the symbol was used as a password among Christians in Roman times.
- **Painted stones (stone fish!):**
Use acrylic paints and unpolished rocks and stones.

- **Shaving foam fish marbling:**
Squirt some shaving foam on to a tray. Add small spots of acrylic paint (any mix of colours). Drag a straw through the paint and foam to create patterns. Lay card fish shapes over the paint and foam and press down lightly. Lift the fish shape, peeling it off the foam and lay upright. Wait for ten seconds, then firmly scrape off all the foam with a squeegee. Talk about how unique we all are and how God wants to love us just as we are.
- **Porcelain plates/bowls fish decorating:**
Decorate ichthus fish symbols on white porcelain plates or bowls (Baker Ross) with porcelain paints or permanent markers. Talk about how Christians painted the ichthus symbol at Christian meeting places.
- **Bubble wrap printing:**
Cut out fish shapes from bubble wrap, paint the bubble side and print on to paper.
- **Pyrography necklaces/key fobs:**
Burn ichthus fish symbols on to wood pieces with a special tool. <http://www.hobbycraft.co.uk/kirstie-all-sopp-pyrography-kit/601704-1000>
- **Ichthus nails:**
Create an ichthus fish template and draw on to a piece of wood. Hammer flat headed nails spaced equally along the outline, leaving enough height on the nail to wrap wool around. Wrap wool or string around the nails, pulling the wool over to other nails, to create a design.
- **Edible fish craft:**
Have a range of supermarket-value fairy cakes or biscuits, writing icing and edible decorations. Mix some icing sugar and water to create a coating for the top of the cake or biscuit. Draw an ichthus shape with writing icing and decorate.
- **Clay ichthus fish:**
Using air-drying clay and sequins, create a clay ichthus shape and decorate with sequin scales.





- **Ichthus candle prayers:**
Draw an Ichthus fish symbol on to paper with a candle. It will look invisible. Continue by writing a prayer. Invite someone to paint over the paper with a paint wash to reveal the prayer.
- **Wooden Ichthus symbols:**
<http://www.craftshapes.co.uk/shape/wooden-jesus-fish-105cm-x-2>
- **All age wall painting:**
Create a wall of paper using wallpaper lining and masking tape. All ages can use any mediums to draw or paint ichthus symbols. For example: paint, charcoal, chalk, etc.
- **Ichthus weaving:**
Arrange some chicken wire on a wooden frame, with strips of blue materials to represent the sea, and hang prayers written on fish shapes on it.

On the way out, have trays of sand. As people leave, they draw a crescent shape in the sand and the next person finishes the symbol with their crescent shape, creating the simple ichthus symbol. Shake the sand tray to start afresh for the next family.

After the event/service, create an ichthus Facebook page to share photos of where families place their fish crafts at home. Offer prayers and Faith in Homes prayer links/ideas. Advertise church services and events.

Ideas are available on the Messy Church Pinterest.