

**Signs and Symbols Chart – By: Andrea Perch**

<b>Sign/Symbol</b>	<b>Universal</b>	<b>Conventional culturally specific</b>	<b>Personal</b>
<b>Object</b>	Fire  Dove = peace	Bouquet of Flowers green = go, the bread = body of Christ for Christians	Childhood stuffed toy; souvenirs from trips
<b>Action</b>	Tears, Laughter	Bowing, finger on lip = be quiet, placing one's hands together in prayer, the sign of the cross (Catholic)	sharing a meal
<b>Person</b>	Grandmother, grandfather	Prime Minister, Priest, celebrities	My students, my principal

"Symbols are connected to recognition, understanding, and communication, and help us to communicate shared values and meanings" (Lavin 107). The signs and symbols in the chart above can convey different meanings at different levels; there are some signs and symbols that are universal, others that are specific to a culture, and some that may be more personal. As Catholics, the ritual sacraments contain symbolic actions and symbols that give us special meaning as "outward sign of invisible grace" (Laving 110). As Bronek Korczynski's podcast explains, the seven sacraments are signs and symbols that guarantee encounters with God whereas other experiences such as seeing the beauty of God's creation in the stars, are opportunities to encounter God where not everyone may consider it a spiritual experience. The sacraments are ways in which we can feel God's presence and saving grace in our lives and important parts of our faith that have meaning both personally and with the community in which they are shared.

References

Korczynski, B. The Relationship between symbols, sacramentals and the sacraments. Podcast found at [https://d2l.educ.queensu.ca/content/CTE136SUM/CONT624/downloads/CONT624\\_422\\_CTE-Rel.mp3](https://d2l.educ.queensu.ca/content/CTE136SUM/CONT624/downloads/CONT624_422_CTE-Rel.mp3)

Lavin, M. (2009). *What We Believe: Practical Theology for Teachers*. Toronto: Novalis Press.