



What Makes Us Catholic?

Why Do You Make the Sign of the Cross?

(If the only answer is because my parents taught me to and now I just keep doing it...read on!)

We have probably made the sign of the cross hundreds, if not thousands, of times in our lives. Did you know this simple gesture could mean much more than you think?

When we make the Sign of the Cross, we are professing one of the deepest mysteries of our faith – the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and the saving work of Christ on the Cross. The combination of words and action are a creed – a statement of belief.

Because we make the Sign of the Cross so often, we may be tempted to rush through it, to say the words without listening to them, to ignore the symbolism of tracing the shape of the Cross on our own bodies. A creed is not simply a statement of belief - it is a vow to defend that belief, even if means following Our Lord and Savior to our own cross.

When we enter or exit the church and make the Sign of the Cross with holy water, we are adding a remembrance of our baptism to this simple yet profound gesture. If we were baptized as babies, the presider, our parents and godparents traced this cross on us when we could not; now we can proclaim this truth and our belief in it on our own.

It is no coincidence that we begin and end our prayers – particularly the Mass – with the Sign of the Cross. The next time you make the Sign of the Cross, think about it. Take the faith of those who taught you and make it your own. And remember it is not just a start to a prayer, but a prayer itself.

Want to read more about this topic?

Book: Sign of the Cross: Recovering the Power of the Ancient Prayer, by Bert Ghezzi

Websites:

- <http://catholicism.about.com/b/2008/08/29/reader-question-why-do-catholics-make-the-sign-of-the-cross.htm>
- <http://www.ewtn.com/library/Liturgy/ZSIGNCRO.HTM>

Do you have questions on this topic, or other topics you would like to learn more about?
Please complete the back side of this sheet and leave it in the box on the back of the Catholic Teachings stand.

Please note your question on this topic, or other topics you would like to learn more about below and leave it in the box on the back of the Catholic Teachings stand.

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