

Signs and Secret Codes

Ready:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.—Romans 1:16

Set:

Coaches often use signals in competition to tell players which play to run, which pitch to throw, where to attack or defend, and more. It's the best way to remind a team what they need to do without letting the other team find out.

Not many know that a familiar Christmas carol was really a song of hidden messages. In the early 16th century, British Catholics were forbidden by law to practice their faith. Anyone caught speaking or writing of his or her faith was arrested or executed. In a time of persecution, similar to the Christians in Rome, Catholics in England went underground. They met and studied secretly and had signs to share their faith.

A song was written to teach the children of their faith. Unbelievers sang it with fun and cheer, yet every believer knew the true meaning. "My true love gave to me" was not about romantic love, rather the love of God and Christ's sacrifice. The "twelve gifts" represented various biblical truths. "Two turtledoves" represented the Old and New Testament, doves symbolizing truth and peace. "Three French Hens" represented the three gifts given to Baby Jesus. This song helped preserve people's faith during a rough time. Let's not keep the message of Jesus Christ a secret today. We live in a land where we don't face execution for our faith—so let's boldly share the truth about God's love.

Go:

1. Do you ever use signs and signals in athletics or elsewhere?
2. Have you ever been made fun of for your faith?
3. List some practical ways you can verbally or outwardly show your faith.

Workout:

Extra Reading: Romans 1:16; Philippians 1:19-21; 2 Timothy 1:11-13; 2:15

Overtime:

Heavenly Father, thank You for inspiring a simple song to remind us of Your love and truth. I ask that Your Spirit will give me boldness to proclaim the truths of Your Word. Amen.

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