# First Steps into Archaeology: Archaeology for Young Children - Lesson Plan 4
# Shield Making

This lesson plan is part of a series of 4 lesson plans focussed on teaching archaeology to young children. It is aimed at pre-school, and junior and senior infant classes in primary schools. This project is a joint initiative between the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council, the Kilkenny County Childcare Committee and Kilkenny Education Centre, with co-funding from the Heritage Council. For further information see www.kilkennycoco.ie/eng/Services/Heritage

## ■ Learning objectives

- *To encourage pupils to recognise the significance of a family identity; and how the family identity was represented as symbols in the past.*
- *To encourage pupils to identify with modern symbols associated with their family identity*
- *To develop discrimination in the similarity and differences in family crest symbols between 'now' and in 'the past.'*

## ■ Learning context

While the use of distinguishing symbols have been adopted by the world's tribes and nations stretching back into ancient history, heraldry as we now define it first became established in Europe following the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066, and became widespread at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th century.

Heraldry is a system of identification that uses hereditary symbols to assist in the identification of individuals on the battlefield and during tournaments.  They were added to shields, crests, surcoats (worn over armor), bardings (horse armour) and banners (personal flags used throughout the middle ages).  They had distinctive symbols, marks, and colors and were first adopted by great noble men. By the mid-thirteenth century, coats of arms were used by lesser nobility, knights, and gentlemen.

During the medieval period, individual coats of arms were passed from father to son.  Because of this, heraldry is important to genealogists and provides evidence of family relationships.  Each generation inherits the shield but alters it with an additional mark.  When families are joined through marriage coats of arms were combined.

In Ireland the Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland grants and confirms coats of arms to individuals and corporate bodies. All arms granted are recorded in the Register of Arms, maintained since the foundation of the Office in 1552.

## ■ Linkage and Integration

(i)     Aistear
        Exploring and thinking, representing feelings and thoughts through symbols
        Communication skills, Expressing themselves through visual arts, selection of symbol. Using language. Identity and belonging, selecting symbolic representations for their own ideas about themselves and their family.

(ii)    Primary school curriculum
        History          Skills and concepts: *working as a historian*
                         Strands:  *myself and my family* - stories
        Visual Arts      Skills and concepts: *Awareness of shape, colour and tone*
                         Strands: *drawing* - making drawings; *paint and colour* – painting; *construction* - making constructions

| (iii) | Archaeology in classroom |
| | n/a |

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■ **Learning activities and method**

The overall aim of these activities is to design a family crest with example symbols from 'now' and in 'the past.'

**Activity 1 - Symbols**
Show a sample of a shield displaying a family crest. Explain the use of a shield.
Display new symbols (manually or through PowerPoint), pupils to guess what the symbols mean
Pair the new symbols with old symbols and the word describing the meaning. (Manually or through PowerPoint).
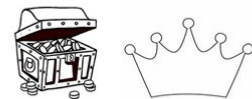
# THE MEANING OF SYMBOLS

| Beauty | Love | Wealth |
|---|---|---|
| Safety | Friendship | Danger |
| Bravery | Smartness | Strength |

**Activity 2 - Shield making**
The pupils pick one or two symbols to paste on their shield. The pupils are encouraged to choose their symbols based on what represents themselves and their families, focusing on the meanings.
Pupils have the option of colouring in the symbols, or an older child could elect to draw the symbol directly on the shield. Pupils cut out and paste symbols onto their shield.
Pupils attach the handle onto the back of the shield (vertical direction) using sellotape or paper tape to fix the 21cm wide strip of paper.

**Activity 3 - Discussion**
The pupils share their shield creations with one another and with the class teacher.

- Who chose what symbol?
- Why did you choose that symbol?
- Why did you choose to put the two symbols together?

Encourage the pupils to understand what the symbols mean. Also, to recognise why they chose their specific symbol and what that says about them. Ask questions. (E.g. If Sarah chose the lion for bravery, why? Is she brave? Does she want to be brave? Does she just like lions?)

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■ **Resources & Materials**

- Shields template (see teaching resources)
- Symbols printed out  (see teaching resources)
- Extra sheets of blank paper
- Crayons and/or coloured pencils
- Scissors
- Tape or Glue
- PowerPoint  - The meaning of symbols images,
- *Prepare the activity in 10 minutes or less*

(i)      Draw  sufficient shield templates for each pupil to have one
(ii)     Photocopy sufficient symbols for pupils to chose from
(iii)    Cut out shield shape
(iv)    Cut out sufficient 21cm wide strips of paper (width of an A4 sheet) for shield handles.
(v)     Distribute scissors, coloured pencils, crayons, glue and tape for activity.
(vi)    Integrate images into PowerPoint slide for symbols with images and explanations; or draw symbols and meanings on the board.

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■ **Teaching Resources**

General information about Ireland's archaeology and history
- http://www.itsabouttime.ie/primary/05links.htm
- http://www.digitkids.ie/teaching_resources

Heraldry
http://www.nli.ie/en/history-of-the-office-of-the-chief-herald.aspx
http://www.fleurdelis.com/meanings.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraldry
http://www.ireland-information.com/heraldichall/irishcoatsofarms.htm

Additional heraldry symbols and meaning of the symbols and colours are available on line at Digitkids.ie/resources

County GAA Colours
http://www.gaa.ie/about-the-gaa/provinces-and-counties/about-county/county-colours/

Chivalry & Codes of Behaviour
http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/knights.html

http://www.kidspast.com/world-history/0213-chivalry.php

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■ **Extension activities**

**(i)**      Tell a story about family names relating back to family crests and symbols

**(ii)**     Explain the symbolism behind the colours on a family crest. Have the pupils include this on their shields with the symbols, or make this a separate activity.

**(iii)**    Discussion about favourite colours, why we identify with specific colours.

**(iv)**    Discuss origins of county colours and crest

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| **(v)** | Discuss the school crest |
| **(vi)** | Discuss your local club or county GAA Crest |