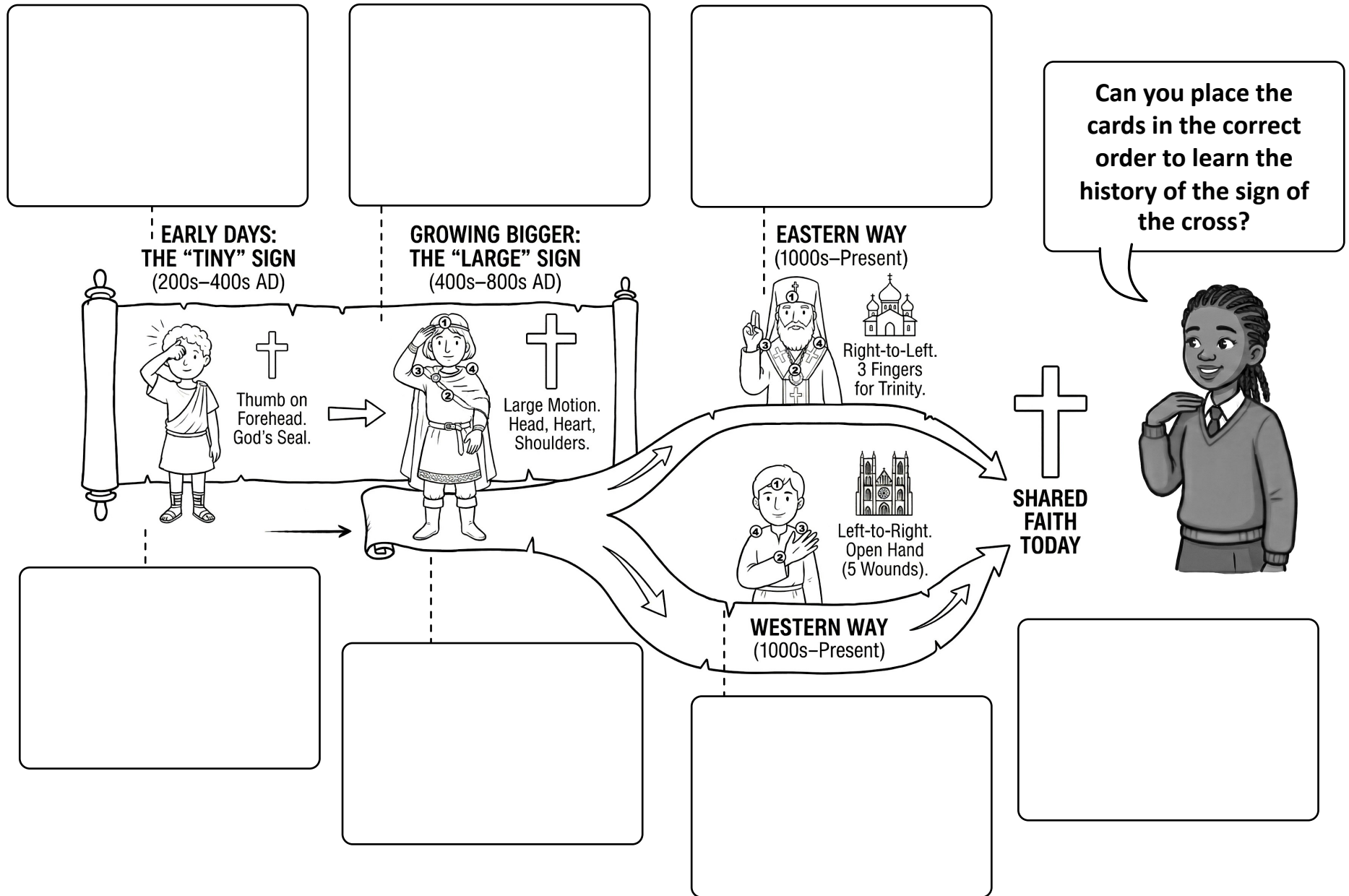


THE HISTORY OF THE SIGN OF THE CROSS: A TIMELINE



Christians did not use the large motion we see today; instead, they used their thumb to trace a small cross only on their foreheads.

They viewed this as a "seal" of protection from God and did it constantly throughout the day.

Originally, everyone crossed from right to left, a tradition the Eastern Church kept, using three fingers to represent the Trinity.

Eventually, the West adopted this left-to-right motion using an open hand to symbolize the five wounds of Jesus.

The gesture grew from the forehead to cover the whole upper body; head, chest, and shoulders.

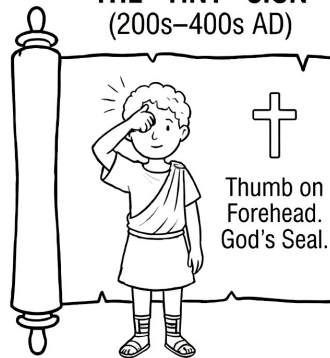
Then in Europe, people began switching to a left-to-right motion, likely because they were "mirroring" the priest who blessed them.

This was to show boldness with their faith as it was then safe to do so. This also helped teach the idea that Jesus came down from heaven to earth.

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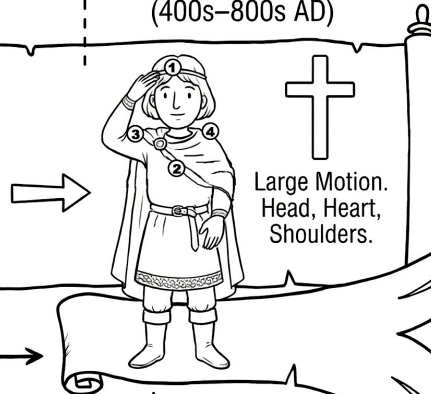
EARLY DAYS: THE "TINY" SIGN (200s–400s AD)



They viewed this as a "seal" of protection from God and did it constantly throughout the day.

The gesture grew from the forehead to cover the whole upper body; head, chest, and shoulders.

GROWING BIGGER: THE "LARGE" SIGN (400s–800s AD)



This was to show boldness with their faith as it was then safe to do so. This also helped teach the idea that Jesus came down from heaven to earth.

Originally, everyone crossed from right to left, a tradition the Eastern Church kept, using three fingers to represent the Trinity.

EASTERN WAY (1000s–Present)



Then in Europe, people began switching to a left-to-right motion, likely because they were "mirroring" the priest who blessed them.

WESTERN WAY (1000s–Present)



Can you place the cards in the correct order to learn the history of the sign of the cross?



SHARED
FAITH
TODAY

Eventually, the West adopted this left-to-right motion using an open hand to symbolize the five wounds of Jesus.

