

Cemetery symbolism

Altar	Reminiscent of the sarcophagi of ancient civilisations
Anchor	Anchor of hope
Book, open or closed	Knowledge; the book of life; the Bible
Branch, tree	A life cut short
Chain, broken	A life cut short, or grief and loss
Chest	Reminiscent of the sarcophagi of ancient civilisations
Column	Modelled on the architecture of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome
Column, broken	A life cut short
Cross	Symbol of faith, Christian
Crown	Crown of glory
Dove with olive sprig	Allusion to the dove of the Ark; the promise of hope
Dove	The Holy Spirit
Flower with broken stem	Life "nipped in the bud"
Hand	The divine hand or the right hand of God
Handshake	Farewell or reunion. Often with the distinctive cuff of a man and a woman (husband and wife reunited)
Hourglass, with or without wings	Someone's time has run out
Ivy	Hope and immortality
Obelisk	Modelled on the architecture of ancient Egypt
Poppy	Sleep
Rose	Place of birth - England
Sad-faced figure	Grief and loss
Shamrock	Place of birth – Ireland
Shell	Ancient fertility symbol; represents resurrection
Thistle	Place of birth - Scotland
Tomb	Reminiscent of the sarcophagi of ancient civilisations
Torch, reversed or extinguished	Death; life extinguished